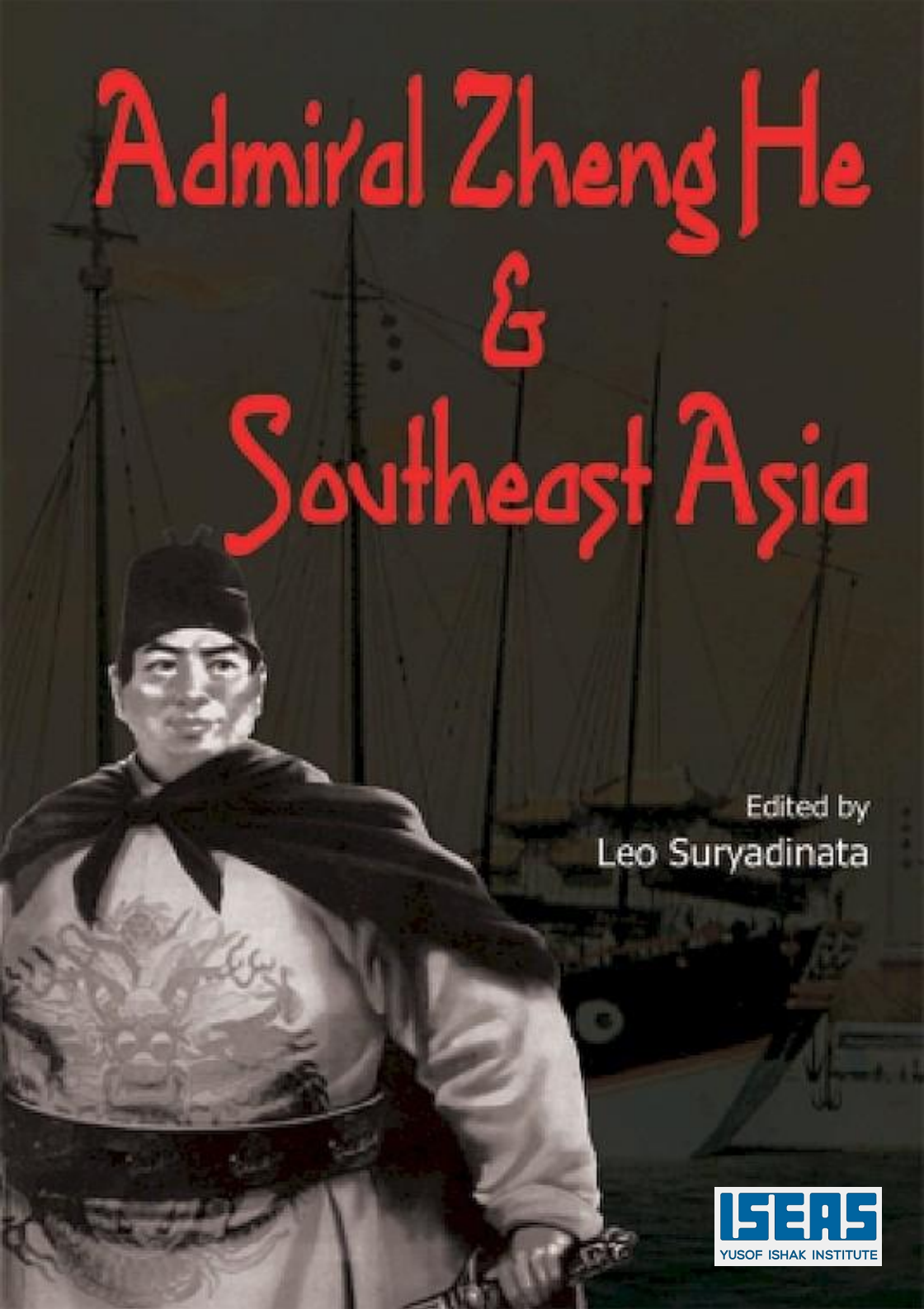
Admiral Zheng He & Southeast Asia



Edited by
Leo Suryadinata

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Admiral Zheng He
&
Southeast Asia

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Singapore

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LAOS
MYANMAR
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INDONESIA

Glossary

The articles reproduced in this book were originally published over a long period of time (1964–2005). Therefore, the Chinese system of spelling differs from article to article. Some use the Wade–Giles system while others use Hanyu Pinyin. Hsu Yun-Ts'iao used his own spelling, for which he had provided the original Chinese characters. This glossary does not include Hsu's spelling and only lists selected names and terms deemed necessary by the editor.

Wade–Giles/Pinyin/Chinese characters

Chan Cheng (Zhan Cheng) 占城
Chan p'o (Zhan Po) 占婆
Chao-wa (Zhaowa) 爪哇
Ch'en Chu Yi (Chen Zuyi) 陈祖义
Cheng Ho (Zheng He) 郑和
Fa Hsien (Fa Xian) 法显
Fei Hsin (Fei Xin) 费信
Hsi-li-ma-ha-la-che (Xi Li Ma Ha La Ze) 西里马哈剌者
Hsi Yang (Xi Yang) 西洋
Hsing-ch'a Sheng-lan (Xing Cha Sheng Lan) 星槎胜
Hsu Yun-ts'iao (Ch'iao) (Xu Yunqiao) 许云樵
Hsuan-te shih-lu (Xuan De Shi Lu) 宣德实录
Hung-wu shih-lu (Hong Wu Shi Lu) 洪武实录
I-ssu-han-ta-er-sha (Yi Si Han Da Er Sha) 亦思罕答儿沙
I-tsing (Yi Jing) 义净
Khuan Shi Kuan (Guan Shi Guan) 管事官

Kong Koan (Gong Guang) 公馆
Kuan Ch'ang (Guan Chang) 官厂
Lih Tai Pao Ann (Li Dai Bao An) 历代宝案
Ma Chu (Ma Zu) 妈祖
Ma Huan (Ma Huan) 马欢
Man-la-chia (Man La Jia) 满剌加
Ming Shih (Ming Shi) 明史
Ming Shih lu 明实录
Mu-kan-sa-yu-ti-er-sha (Mu Gan Sa Yu De Er Sha) 母干撒于的儿沙
Pai-li-mi-su-la (Bai Li Mi Su La) 拜里米苏拉
Sam Po (San Pao) 三宝；三保
Sam Po Kong (San Bao Gong) 三宝公；三保公
San Fu Chi (San Fo Qi) 三佛齐
San Pao Lung (San Bao Long) 三宝垄
San Po Tay Jin (San Bao Da Ren) 三宝大人；三保大人
Shih Chin Ch'ing (Shi Jin Qing) 史进卿
Shih Ta Niang Tzi Pi Na Ti (Shi Da Niang Zi Bi Na Zhi) 施大娘子婢那智
Shuan wei shih (Xuan Wei Shi) 宣慰使
Tung Hsi Yang K'ao (Dong Yi Yang Kao) 东西洋考
Tung Yang (Dong Yang) 东洋
Wu Pei Chih (Wu Bei Zhi) 武备志
Yin Ch'ing (Yin Qing) 尹庆
Ying-ya sheng-lan (Yin Ya Sheng Lan) 赢涯胜
Ying-yai sheng-lan chiao chu (Yin Ya Sheng Lan Jiao Zhu) 赢涯胜览校注
Yung-lo Shih-lu (Yong Le Shi Lu) 永乐实录

Introduction

Leo Suryadinata

Admiral Zheng He (Cheng Ho 郑和) was also known as San Bao Da Ren (三宝大人; 三保大人), San Bao Tai Jian (三宝太监; 三保太监), and San Bao Gong (三宝公; 三保公). The year 2005 is the 600th anniversary of Zheng He's maiden voyage to Southeast Asia and beyond. The anniversary is commemorated by numerous celebrations with Zheng He as the main theme, including international conferences, exhibitions, and publications. This book is composed in the context of this celebration. The Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore and the International Zheng He Society consider it significant to review Zheng He's activities in Southeast Asia, which took place 600 years ago. Nine English articles on Zheng He, originally published from 1964 to 2005 and written by Asian scholars to reflect Asian views, have been reproduced in this volume.

The articles are grouped into three clusters. The first three articles examine the relationship of the Ming court, especially during the Zheng He expeditions, with Southeast Asia in general and the Malacca empire in particular. The fourth, fifth, and sixth articles examine the socio-cultural impact of the Zheng He expeditions on some Southeast Asian countries, with special reference to the role played by Zheng He in the Islamization of Indonesia (Java) and the urban architecture of the region. The last three articles examine the route of the Zheng He expeditions and the location of the places that were visited.

FOREIGN RELATIONS AND THEIR NATURE

Since the end of World War II, some Asian scholars have studied the Ming Dynasty and Southeast Asia with reference to Zheng He. One of the pioneers of the Zheng He and Southeast Asian studies is Professor Wang Gungwu who wrote a number of impressive papers on the Ming Dynasty's relations with Southeast Asia in general and with Malaya/Malaysia in particular.

In his article written in 1964 on the early Ming's relations with Malacca (Chapter 1), Wang detailed the Ming court relations with Parameswara, the founder of the Malacca kingdom, and the nature of that relationship. This coincided with the period of the Zheng He expeditions. Using the Chinese sources, Wang argued that Emperor Yong Le during the Ming Dynasty took the initiative to send eunuch Yin Ch'ing (尹庆 Yin Qing) to lead a mission to Malacca in 1403, and the Zheng He's voyages, starting in 1405, were part of the same desire to expand China's foreign relations. Wang also pointed out that Yong Le inherited the previous policy of the Ming emperors "to suppress the flourishing private trade in overseas goods which encouraged piracy on the Chinese coast".

The article stressed that the Ming relationship with Malacca was based on mutual benefit. During that time, Malacca was under the threat of both Siam and Majapahit. Therefore, Parameswara and the other kings of Malacca also saw the economic benefits to be gained by the establishment of close relations with the Ming court.

Although the Chinese followed the Confucian order concept (or in Wang's words, "Confucian universal state") and the tributary system in conducting its foreign relations, Malacca and other "tributary" states might have not seen it from the Chinese view. Wang stated that "Parameswara was shrewd enough to see that a special relationship would bring Malacca no harm but greatly add

to his prestige. What was important was the size of Zheng He's fleet, the wealth in the ships' holds, and the trade the Chinese could bring."

Wang further argued that both the Ming court and Malacca established a very close relationship. Malacca was the first "foreign nation" to receive the emperor's inscription, and the Malacca kings visited China in Zheng He's ship. He concluded that "this close relationship with China continued until 1435 when the Ming court finally abandoned Yung-lo's policy of state-trading. By that time, Malacca's international position was unassailable."

In the 1968 article on the first three kings of Malacca (Chapter 2), Wang painstakingly elaborated on the previous erroneous assumption that Parameswara was the Malacca king who, after his conversion to Islam, changed his name to Iskandar Shah. Using the Chinese source again, Wang was able to convincingly argue that Iskandar Shah was the son of Parameswara. He was the one who visited China to report to the Ming court that his father had died, and he was the successor to the throne. Wang also maintained that:

> All three kings of Malacca were transported to China in Chinese ships following some of the Cheng Ho expeditions. Malacca needed help against Siam and China needed a base for fleets to the Indian oceans. This was a sound basis for 30 years of close relations between China and Malacca … But after 30 years of Chinese protection, Malacca was obviously ready to look after itself and it did so with increasing confidence and success for the remainder of the century.

The two articles by Wang serve as a good introduction to the Zheng He expeditions from 1405 to 1433 and, hence, this book on *Admiral Zheng He and Southeast Asia*. They analyse the Ming

policy towards Southeast Asia and the significance of the Zheng He expeditions to the history of the region. They underline the two important decades in Malaccan history when Zheng He's ships used the country as a vital base, thereby laying the foundation for the Malay empire.

The Zheng He expeditions are not without controversy. Dr Geoff Wade maintained that it was a type of proto-colonialism, similar to that of the Portuguese. Drs Tan Ta Sen disagreed with that view and argued that it was basically different from Western colonialism as there were no Ming colonies in the Western sense (Chapter 3). Tan maintained that Zheng He's expeditions were a reflection of the Ming Confucian concept policy and the tributary trading system. Using Chinese sources, he views the Zheng He saga from the perspective of the Chinese Confucian order and the context of tributary trade, which was fundamentally different from Western colonialism that follows the industrialization of the West. Tan's argument is closer to that of Wang Gungwu's, but not exactly the same. Tan stressed the Confucian aspect while Wang emphasized the aspects of security of the dynasty and state trading.

SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACT

There was no doubt that Zheng He created a great political/security impact on Southeast Asia. But the socio-cultural impact of the expeditions is seldom addressed. The late Tan Yeok Seong used *Lidai Baoan* (历代宝案 Dynasty Documentary Records of Ryukyu), which has seldom been used in Zheng He studies, and combined it with Western sources (e.g. Raffles's *History of Java*) to trace the story of Shi Da Niang Zi 施大娘子 of Palembang, the daughter of a Chinese Muslim officer called Shih Chin Ching

(Shi Jin Qing 施进卿) sent by Zheng He to replace Chen Zuyi 陈祖义 in Palembang (Chapter 4). Shi Da Niang Zi is known as Nyai Gede (i.e., Da Niang Zi or grand old lady) Pinatih in both the local and Western history. The Shi family had a close relationship with Zheng He. Tan Yeok Seong argued that "when the family was in trouble after Shih Chin Ching's death, it sought the personal intervention of the aged eunuch". Shi Da Niang Zi left Palembang for Gresik and was influential in spreading Islam in that area. Tan further argued that "the Chinese elements could indeed be considered as one of the driving forces or 'paku' [nail] in the new movement of Islamization in Malaysia [and Indonesia]."

In Chapter 5, Dr Leo Suryadinata discusses the Islamization of Java during the Zheng He period. Arguing that although Chinese sources may be useful, they may not be able to throw new light on the Islamization of Java due to various reasons. He noted the existence of local historical records and recent studies may help explain the role of the Zheng He expeditions in spreading Islam in Java and Malacca. Nevertheless, the local sources had to be used critically as many contain more legend than history. Besides, oral history and historical sites are also important in judging the impact of the Zheng He expeditions. Without these, the story of Zheng He would not be complete.

Dr Johannes Widodo explores the heritage, links, and connections of Admiral Zheng He in the coastal regions of Southeast Asia, especially in the urban culture, settlement structures, and architecture (Chapter 6). "Here history is perceived as a layering process rather than a linear succession of events. Thus in this sense, the city or settlement can be seen as a repository of cumulative memory of its inhabitants along time, a unique formation of urban culture and identity."

THE ZHENG HE ROUTE AND PLACES VISITED

There have been many studies on the places visited by Zheng He's fleet. For this collection, two articles by the late Professor Hsu Yun-Ts'iao 许云樵 have been selected. One is his notes relating to Zheng He's expeditions to the Western Ocean (Chapter 7), and the other his article on whether Zheng He's fleet visited the Philippines (Chapter 8). Hsu, a self-taught historian, taught at Nanyang University in the late fifties and early sixties. He was an expert on Southeast Asian ancient history based on the Chinese historical records. His 1976 article on Zheng He (Chapter 7) is not an integrated paper but a series of notes on a number of questions relating to Zheng He and his expeditions: the meaning of San Bao, whether Zheng He was a eunuch, the location of "West Ocean" 西洋, the number of voyages Zheng He made, the dates of Zheng He's charts, and the size of Zheng He's ships. All of these are interesting questions, but his answers are too brief. In fact, many other scholars have attempted to answer some of the questions raised by Hsu but many questions still remain unsatisfactorily answered.

In an earlier article written in 1968 (Chapter 8), Hsu discussed Zheng He's assumed visit to the Philippines. Hsu noted that Zheng He only visited the Western Ocean, not the Eastern Ocean 东洋, where the present-day Philippines is located. Hence he insisted that Zheng He never visited the Philippines.

In fact, the places that Zheng He visited have been studied by many scholars, but there has never been complete agreement among them. For instance, in the Chinese sources there was no record that Zheng He had ever visited San Bao Long 三宝垄 (or the similar-sounding Semarang in Bahasa Indonesia). Nevertheless, both local history and the Chinese community in that area strongly believe that Zheng He had visited Semarang —

indeed, San Bao Long was named after San Bao (i.e., Zheng He). Even the location of the places that Zheng He visited or noted is still a matter for debate. The landmark called Long Ya Men 龙牙门 (Lungyamen) is a case in point. Some scholars said it is in Johore, some said in the Riau Straits. Others maintained that it is in Singapore (present-day Keppel Harbour). Mr Chung Chee Kit, a maritime engineer, argues that Long Ya Men is Singapore (Chapter 9). He re-examines what has been researched by others, including the recent publication by the late Mr Lin Wo Ling 林我铃, employing modern navigational methods and recalculating the distance. He eventually came to the conclusion that Long Ya Men is indeed in Singapore!

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The nine articles included in this book show that Zheng He and his expeditions are fascinating subjects of study, and the sources are not restricted to the Chinese language. There is no general agreement on the factors that contributed to the expeditions of Zheng He. Nevertheless, consulting both Chinese and non-Chinese sources is necessary. However, analyses should be in the historical context, not by taking them out of context. The debate on the reasons for the Zheng He's expeditions will no doubt continue.

It should be noted that in the case of Wang Gungwu's studies, conventional Chinese sources are indeed useful. When used properly and innovatively, they are able to answer many important and interesting historical questions. However, conventional Chinese chronicles are unable to answer questions relating to Zheng He's role in the Islamization of Indonesia and Malaysia (Malacca). Non-traditional sources, both Chinese and non-Chinese, throw light on this issue as shown in the articles by Tan Yeok Seong and Leo Suryadinata. Nevertheless, the Chinese sources remain

important. However, confining the research to conventional Chinese chronicles alone will not reveal the complete picture of the Zheng He expeditions, especially if the impact of the admiral on the history of Southeast Asia is to be known.

It is also true that the studies on Zheng He, both in English and Chinese, are not exhaustive yet; many aspects remain to be explored. It is hoped that more Asian scholars will follow suit in the near future.

Chapter 1

THE OPENING OF RELATIONS BETWEEN CHINA AND MALACCA, 1403–05

Wang Gungwu

The early history of Malacca has provided scholars with many problems. Sir Richard Winstedt's contribution has been a careful analysis of Malay sources, including a study of the genealogies of the Malacca royal house. He has also drawn attention to the material in Tomé Pires's *Suma Oriental*, where the story of how Malacca was founded cannot be better told. The events in Palembang, in Singapore, in Muar, and then in Malacca, which probably occurred during the last two decades of the fourteenth century, show the rise to local power of Parameswara, the founder of Malacca.[1] As to how and when Malacca became an important international trading power, we have to turn to Chinese writings for our earliest records. The best known of these writings are Ma Huan's *Ying-yai Shêng-lan* and Fei Hsin's *Hsing-ch'a Shêng-lan*, which record the expeditions of Chêng Ho (1405–33), and the official history of the Ming dynasty (the *Ming Shih*), which presents a chronology of Sino-Malacca relations during the fifteenth-century.[2]

Reprinted from Wang Gungwu, "The Opening of Relations between China and Malacca, 1403–5", in *Malayan and Indonesian Studies Essays presented to Sir Richard Winstedt on his 85th Birthday*, edited by John Bastin and R. Roolvink, pp. 87–104 (Clarendon: Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1964), by permission of the publisher.

The present study examines the question of how the Ming court came to open relations with Parameswara in the years 1403–05 and what the nature of that relationship was. New documentary and chronological material is now available in the *Ming Shih-lu* (Veritable Records of the Ming) and a careful examination of this material has thrown some light on the subject. Specially valuable is the *Yung-lo Shih-lu* in 130 chüans, the Veritable Records of the reign of the Emperor Yung-lo (1402–24), which was the source-book of the *Ming Shih* and most of the other sixteenth- and seventeenth-century works which touch on the subject of Malacca.[3] The *Yung-lo Shih-lu* was compiled between the years 1425 and 1430. Although it merely recorded the official relations between China and Malacca, it is the *earliest* surviving work which mentions the activities of Malacca. Also, it is the daily record of Yung-lo's reign, carefully compiled from material in the Imperial Archives. Where foreign relations were concerned, the following rule was applied: "The sending of envoys to communicate with [countries beyond] the four borders and their appointments, acceptances, presentations and rewards are all recorded. Also recorded are the missions of foreign countries and such banquets and gifts [which were given them]." This rule indicates that the material was as complete as was possible at the time.[4]

The first question to be considered is when and how the Chinese court first heard of Malacca. We know that the very first reference to Malacca in the Chinese records occurs when the eunuch Yin Ch'ing was ordered by the emperor to visit Malacca in 1403. Ma Huan says later that when the Chinese first visited Malacca, its chief was paying tribute to Siam, but nowhere can we find reference to how this "Siamese tributary state" became known to the Chinese court.[5] With the help of the *Yung-lo Shih-lu*, we can now form some idea as to how this happened.

First let us consider what the Chinese officials knew about South-east Asia at the time of Yung-lo's accession in July 1402. We know that Yung-lo lost no time in establishing contact with foreign nations. Thirteen days after he came to the throne on 30 July 1402, he prohibited private trading overseas as his father had done before. A month after that, he began to send missions to inform the foreign nations of his accession — first to Korea, then Tibet and Nepal, and then to the Mongol nations. As for South-east Asia, he first sent his envoys south on 3 October.[6] This flurry of activity may be compared with the first year of his father Emperor Hung-wu's reign in 1368–9. But what, in fact, did Yung-lo know about South-east Asia more than thirty years later? Emperor Hung-wu did not encourage closer relations with countries beyond Siam, especially after 1380, but, during the last years of his reign, there were new developments which throw light both on what Yung-lo and his ministers knew and why they pursued a positive policy towards South-east Asia and the countries of the Indian Ocean.

During the last five years before Hung-wu's death in 1398, Siam sent missions annually or biannually as before, relations being perfectly normal. On the other hand, Champa sent her first mission in six years in 1397 and Java, which had not sent any missions since 1382, sent missions two years running (in fact, within six months of each other) in 1393 and 1394. These were the only nations of South-east Asia to have relations with China and it is interesting that Java should renew relations at a time when imperial policy was hardening against the significant increase in private trading overseas as can be seen from the following facts:[7]

29 December 1393: Mission from Java.

14 February 1394: Officials were ordered to punish heavily

	those who traded privately overseas; there was also a prohibition of all use of foreign goods, especially foreign scented woods, by ordinary people.
11 May 1394:	The ceremony of presenting foreign kings and envoys of missions to the emperor and heir apparent was simplified.
21 May 1394:	Another mission from Java.

As no mission had come from the areas south of Siam since 1382, the reappearance of a Java mission in 1393 was welcomed by the court as a way to suppress private trade and encourage state trading. Java, however, did not send any more missions after 1394, and in 1397 (30 April) the court admitted that private trading was far from discouraged when it had to order once again that unauthorized trading overseas should be prohibited. So anxious was the court to re-establish state trading on a larger scale that when Siam sent a mission in September later that year (1397), the Siamese were asked to convey the emperor's wishes to Java that more missions be sent to China and that the Javanese king should curb his vassal state of Sri Vijaya and stop it from interfering with missions sent to China. The long comment on Sri Vijaya by the emperor himself and the long letter to the king of Siam made it clear that the court was out of touch with the situation in Java and Sumatra.[8] The Chinese were not yet aware that Sri Vijaya had already fallen and that it was not Sri Vijaya which was preventing more missions from going to China. The more likely reason was that private trading was perfectly satisfactory on the Chinese coasts and no official contacts were considered really necessary by the nations south of Siam.

This brief summary shows that in 1397 the court knew little of the political changes south of Siam. It is possible, however, that the emperor was enlightened about the situation by the Siamese

mission the next year in April 1398, but nothing was apparently done about this, as the emperor had fallen ill twelve days before the mission was presented and died two months later.[9]

As no records of Emperor Chien-wên's reign (1398–1402) have survived,[10] we can only assume that Yung-lo's knowledge of South-east Asia was limited to that available to his father in 1398. His own views might well have been similar to those of his father nine months before his death in September 1397, which I quote below:

> At the beginning of our reign, the various nations had relations with China. Their envoys were unending and *the merchants found this convenient*. [my italics] There were nations like Annam, Champa, Cambodia, Siam, Java, Ryukyu, Sri Vijaya, Brunei, Pahang, Pai-hua [?], Samudra, Hsi-yang [Chola?] and Pang-ha-la [Bengal?], a total of 30 nations. [But] when Hu Wei-yung planned his treachery, Sri Vijaya joined in the intrigue and deceived our envoys to go there. The king of Java heard about this and warned Sri Vijaya to send [the envoys] back with ceremony. Since then, envoys and merchants have been obstructed. Thus the feelings of the various kings have not been made known [to us]. Only Annam, Champa, Cambodia, Siam and Ryukyu have been coming continually since their first missions.[11]

Compare this with Yung-lo's instructions to the Ministry of Rites concerning the envoys sent out on 3 October 1402.

> In the time of T'ai-tsu Kao Huang-ti [his father], the various nations who sent missions were all treated with good faith. Those who brought their native products to trade were all allowed to do so. When any of them did not know what to avoid and mistakenly broke the regulations, they were treated leniently in order to win over distant peoples. Now that the world is as one family, it is proper to show to all that we do not discriminate against anyone. The nations who sincerely wish to come with

> tribute may all do so. You are to inform them about this so that they clearly know my will.[12]

It is not surprising then that the Chinese envoys were sent to the countries which had already established contact during Emperor Hung-wu's reign, including Samudra and India.

[Table 1.1 lists] the main events of 1402–03 connected with the extension of Chinese relations overseas.

Siam and Champa appear to have responded quickly to the invitation to send missions to China. As for Java, a mission did not arrive until Wên Liang-fu had already been appointed to go to Java, Samudra, and India. But after the Java mission was received and fêted, a new set of envoys under Ma Pin was appointed to visit the same places.

There are several interesting points here which are relevant to this study. As can be seen in the table, three missions are recorded as having been sent up the Straits of Malacca before Yin Ch'ing was ordered to go to Malacca itself. With all three, there was no mention of Malacca and there is no reason to believe that the court had heard of Malacca before 1 October 1403. If the first mission of October 1402 had heard of Malacca on their way to Samudra, they could not have got back in time to tell their news before Yin Ch'ing was sent out in October 1403.[13] And the other two were ordered to go only a short while before Yin Ch'ing was sent out. If the Chinese had had prior knowledge of Malacca, it is curious that Ma Pin should have been sent to Samudra and India without stopping at Malacca and be followed four weeks later by a new mission sent to Malacca and Cochin.

This last mission would also indicate that the court did not hear of Malacca from either the Siamese envoys early in 1403 or the Javanese envoys in September. This is not surprising as neither Siam nor Java would have willingly admitted that a new centre had

TABLE 1.1
October 1402–October 1403[a]

1402	
3 October	Sent envoys to Siam, Java, Ryukyu, Japan, Hsi-yang (Chola?), Samudra, and Champa.
1403	
25 February	Fêted the envoys of Siam.
27 February	Sent envoys with gifts to the king of Siam.
1 July	Sent envoys to Siam.
9 August	Received Champa mission.
25 August	Sent envoys separately to Siam, Champa, and Cambodia; sent Wên Liang-fu to Java, Hsi-yang (Chola?), and Samudra.
29 August	Established Bureau of Maritime Trade.
21 September	Received Java mission.
26 September	Fêted Java mission "and others" (?).
1 October	Sent eunch Ma Pin to Java, and also to Hsi-yang (Chola?) and Samudra.
6 October	Siam mission presented with gifts.
10 October	Sent eunuch envoy to Siam.
22 October	Yung-lo comments on Muslim traders from Hsi-yang (?) coming with a Chinese mission which returned from Siam.
28 October	Sent eunuch Yin Ch'ing to Malacca, Cochin, and other places.

Notes: [a] *Yung-lo Shih-lu*, ch. 12A, 8b; ch. 16, 7b and 8b; ch. 20, 6a and 15a; ch. 21, 2b–3a, 3b–4a; ch. 22, 2a, 3a, 3b–4a, 5b and 6b; ch. 23, 3a and 5b. In *MS* Basic Annals, ch. 6, Ia–b, only one of these dates is recorded, that of Ma Pin's mission to Java; the list of missions from Siam, Champa, and Java is placed at the end of the year (1403).

With four exceptions, the dates are to be found in T'an Ch'ien, *Kuo Ch'üeh* (compiled in the middle of the seventeenth century, but never published until 1958 in Peking), 878, 895, 905, 908, 909, 911, 912, 913, 915. The material, however, is abbreviated and the four items left out are those concerning the fêting of Siam and Java, the presenting of gifts to the Siam mission, and the important imperial comment on Muslim traders from Siam.

arisen outside their direct control. Even the later Siamese mission of October 1403 could hardly be expected to tell the Chinese about the importance of a place which they considered as one of their tributary states. What then induced the court to appoint Yin Ch'ing twenty-seven days after Ma Pin was sent to Java and eighteen days after another eunuch envoy was sent to Siam? *Yung-lo Shih-lu* says that six days before Yin Ch'ing was ordered to go, the emperor commented on the earlier arrival of Muslim traders from Siam. The comment reads as follows:

> Lately the Muslim Haji and others from the "Western Ocean" were at Siam when our mission arrived and they followed the mission back to the court. Such distant foreigners who know respect for China are indeed praiseworthy. Now that they are being sent home, the Ministry of Rites should give them the credentials to ensure that the officials on their way will not obstruct them. From now on all foreign nations who wish to come to China may be allowed to do so.[14]

This was followed three weeks later (14 November) by the emperor's refusal to tax Muslim traders for selling pepper. The entry in the *Yung-lo Shih-lu* reads:

> The Muslim Haji Ma-ha-mo Ch'i-ni and others from the country of Hsi-yang La-ni [?] came to the court with a tribute of native goods. Because they traded the pepper which they brought with the people, the authorities asked that this trade be taxed. The emperor replied, "The commercial tax is for the purpose of discouraging people from pursuing trade as a profession and surely not for profit to the state. Now the foreigners have come from afar out of admiration for us and we want to cut into his profits. We can only get very little [revenue] while this will completely degrade our principles." The request was rejected.[15]

It seems clear that the Muslim traders from Hsi-yang La-ni were those whom the emperor had referred to earlier as having come with the Chinese mission to Siam. Now between the first and the second comment by the emperor on these traders, Yin Ch'ing was ordered to go to Malacca, Cochin, and "other nations". The juxtaposition of dates as outlined above gives us an interesting clue to the source of the court's knowledge of Malacca. It could have been these Muslims who were responsible for informing the court of the new centre of Malacca and even for persuading the court that it would be worth while to send a mission there.

The intriguing question is, who were these Muslim traders and what could have been their interest in Malacca? They are described as having come from Hsi-yang, which was a name thought to have been used in early references as an abridged form for Hsi-yang So-li or Chola of the Western Ocean.[16] But during Yung-lo's reign and in various later sources, Hsi-yang was also used as a general term for the Indian Ocean. Neither Ma Huan nor Fei Hsin mentions Chola (either as So-li or as Hsi-yang), while Ma Huan seems to have used So-li to describe south Indians in general, and both writers used Hsi-yang for the Indian Ocean.[17] We know also that Yin Ch'ing was instructed to go to Cochin and that he returned in October 1405 with a mission from the ruler of Calicut (see Table 1.2). There is again no mention of Chola. We cannot therefore say that the "Hsi-yang" Muslim traders who came via Siam or the Muslim traders of "Hsi-yang La-ni" were from Chola, but there is no doubt that they were from south India, probably from the Malabar coast, where overseas trade was dominated by Muslims.[18]

The question as to what their interests could have been in Malacca is much more difficult to answer. The fact that they came from Siam with the Chinese mission was unusual, or it would not have received imperial comment. It suggests that they persuaded the Chinese missions to bring them. This also suggests

TABLE 1.2
July–November 1405[a]

11 July	Sent Chêng Ho to various nations of the Western Ocean.
18 July	Ordered the construction of 1,180 ships at Chekiang and other centres.
25 July	Promoted four officers for their part in the mission to the Western Ocean.
7 August	Siam mission received.
10 August	Champa and Cambodia missions received.
12 August	Sent envoys to Cambodia.
7 September	Repaired the Hui-t'ung Kuan to accomodate the large numbers of foreign missions.
23 September	Fêted the envoys of Hsi-yang (?), Java, and Palembang.
24 September	Expanded the facilities of the Bureau of Maritime Trade at Fukien, Kwangtung, and Chekiang, because of the increase in foreign missions.
3 October	Samudra, Malacca, and Calicut missions (came with Yin Ch'ing) received.
8 October	Gifts presented to Siamese envoys and Moslem traders.
15 October	Java mission received, together with missions from three states neighbouring Java.
18 October	Promoted Wên Liang-fu (envoys of August 1403) who returned from "the various foreign nations of the South-west (Ocean)".

21 October	Fêted the envoys of Hsi-yang Ku-li (Calicut), Samudra, Java, and other nations.
27 October	Sent envoys to Fan-su-er (Pansur or Barus), Mi-nang-ko-po (Minangkabau), Luzon, Ma-yeh-wêng (Billiton), Lambri, and So-lo (or P'o-lo for Brunei?)[b]
6 November	Fêted envoys of Hsi-yang Ku-li (Calicut), Samudra, Malacca, Java, and others.
7 November	Promoted two officers for serving in a mission to Java.
11 November	Presented Malacca with an inscription for the State Mountain, composed personally by Emperor Yung-lo.

Notes: [a] *YLSL*, ch. 35, 6b, 7b, 8b–9a; ch. 36, 3b, 5a, 6a; ch. 37, 2b, 4a, 5b, 6a, 7a, 7b; ch. 38, 2a, 3a, 4a, 4b–5b. In *MS* Basic Annals, ch. 6, 4a–b, only the order to send Chêng Ho is recorded and the list of missions, except that of Cambodia, is placed at the end of the year (1405). With eight exceptions, the dates are to be found in *Kuo Ch'üeh*, 953–61. The items left out are those concerning the entertaining of Java, Siam, Calicut, Samudra, and Malacca, the promotion of naval officers, the building of ships and the repairing of Hui-t'ung Kuan.

[b] *YLSL*, ch. 38, 2a. This item clarifies the obscure passage in *MS*, ch. 323, 19a–b, which ends by mentioning two countries, Ko-po and Su-er-mi-nang. The *MS* editors had obviously misunderstood the *YLSL* to mean the foreign (*fan*) Su-er-mi-nang and Ko-po. They were correct, however, in placing the two countries together with Ma-yeh-wêng (Billiton). These envoys were ordered out probably because of the new relations with Samudra and Malacca or possibly because of the newly established relations with the Chinese at Palembang earlier in February 1405 (*YLSL*, ch. 33, 5a–b). As for So-lo (娑), it would be easy to confuse it with P'o-lo (婆) and must be distinguished from Su-lu ( ), for Sulu; but whether P'o-lo referred to the same country as P'o-ni (Brunei), is not certain.

that they had difficulties in reaching China in other ways, or that the Siamese were not helpful in supplying them with cheap Chinese goods. The Chinese market for pepper was obviously also an added attraction. As these south Indian Muslims traded in Siam, they would have been aware of the trading conditions in the Siamese tributary states on the west coast of the Malay peninsula and realized the potentialities of the newly developed and, for the Indian traders, more convenient centre of Malacca.[19] After all, the Malacca ruler welcomed Indian traders, and if more Chinese goods were brought there, a profitable trade could be established. It is likely that they thought the Chinese should be told of the commercial possibilities of Malacca. This explanation of the strange decision to send Yin Ch'ing to Malacca on 28 October 1403 would fit the few facts we have.

The above discussion attempts to determine if Yin Ch'ing's voyage was brought about by Muslim merchants of South India. It leads us also to consider whether Yin Ch'ing's was the only mission, of the four sent out since Yung-lo's accession, to go to the new trading centre of Malacca. We know nothing about the mission sent to Samudra and Hsi-yang in October 1402, not even when it returned to China.[20] Table 1.2 for the year 1405, however, indicates that the two other missions of 1403 did not go to India and return to China in 1405. It also shows the connexion between the return of these missions and Yin Ch'ing's and the sharp increase in activity concerning maritime relations, including the first Chêng Ho voyage.

Although there is no actual record of the return of both the missions of Wên Liang-fu and Ma Pin of 1403, the promotion of four officers on 25 July 1405 suggests that these missions returned some time before this and Chêng Ho's orders to go to the Hsi-yang might have followed news of their return. But it will be noted that no mission was presented before 23 September, when Hsi-yang

"envoys" were entertained with those of Java and Palembang. This was followed ten days later, on 3 October, by the audience given to the Samudra, Malacca, and Cochin envoys. The Samudra envoys were specifically mentioned as having come with Yin Ch'ing's mission although it was Wên Liang-fu and Ma Pin who were sent to Samudra and not Yin Ch'ing. This, and the long delay from July to September, raises the question whether the three missions of 1403 went to India as separate missions and returned separately. The fact that the first two are nowhere recorded as having returned leads me to believe that the three missions returned together and might well have travelled together from the start.

The following reconstruction of the voyages would fit the dates we have. The three missions of 1403 set out together, visited Java and Palembang, and then went on to Malacca, Samudra, and Calicut and returned together. They arrived at the south coast of China in the middle of 1405, and, leaving both the Chinese and foreign envoys at Canton, the naval vessels sailed up the coast to T'ai-ts'ang at the mouth of the Yangtse. The envoys then proceeded overland in a leisurely manner, as was the custom, to Nanking. The foreign envoys might have arrived in two batches and been presented to the emperor in order of arrival. This would explain why the officers were promoted in July, and why, in anticipation of the arrival of large foreign missions, the Hui-t'ung Kuan was ordered to be repaired, and also why the day after the meeting the Hsi-yang envoys (24 September), there was an order to extend the facilities of the Bureau of Maritime Trade at the southern ports. The promotion of the Chinese envoy on 18 October (and not earlier with the officers in July) also points to his having accompanied the foreign missions overland to Nanking. Finally, as only Yin Ch'ing is mentioned, it is likely that he was the senior Chinese envoy, with both Wên Liang-fu and Ma Pin as his subordinates.

I have so far shown that until October 1403, the Chinese court had no knowledge of Malacca; that it was probably some Muslim merchants from south India who persuaded the court that Malacca was a great commercial centre; and that Malacca was visited by a combined mission possibly three times the size of ordinary Chinese missions. This mission, under the overall command of the eunuch Yin Ch'ing, would have reached Malacca in the middle of 1404 after visiting Java and Palembang, and then returned to Malacca from India and Samudra early in 1405 to pick up the first Malacca mission to China.

We can find no evidence in the *Sějarah Mělayu*, or in the Portuguese writings, that Malacca sought relations with China, and the Chinese records point clearly to the fact that it was China which took the initiative in sending a mission to Malacca. We may explain this by pointing to the Chêng Ho voyages and describing the mission to Malacca as part of the same urge to expand China's foreign relations. But nearly two years divide Yin Ch'ing's voyage (1403) from Chêng Ho's first expedition (1405) and we should perhaps look instead to the reasons for Yin Ch'ing's voyage in order to explain Chêng Ho's.

We have already seen how the emperor Hung-wu had revived his interest in state trading during the last years of his reign, 1394–8, because he wanted to suppress the flourishing private trade in overseas goods which encouraged piracy on the Chinese coasts. Just before he died, he was about to embark on a policy of closer relations with the maritime nations to the south of Siam. With his death, however, the civil war of 1398–1402 between Emperor Chien-wên and his uncle made such a policy impossible. When Yung-lo ascended the throne in July 1402, he merely reaffirmed his father's policy. Being a usurper, he was particularly anxious to show loyalty to his father's plans, and he realized that the arrival

of many foreign missions would enhance his prestige at home.

His father's last statement on foreign relations in September 1397 (quoted above), however, shows clearly that he was specially concerned with the convenience of merchants and was trying to remove the obstructions to official trade. It is significant that later historians, especially those who compiled the *Ming Shih*, omitted the phrase, "the merchants found this convenient".[21] This has added to our difficulty in understanding Yung-lo's decisions on maritime expeditions. No doubt there were other reasons why Yung-lo was willing to invest so much in foreign relations, but the initial impulse of resuming his father's policy to expand state trading must be given priority over the others.

This policy was confirmed by the decisions Yung-lo made during the first year and a half after his accession: the edict of 30 July 1402, prohibiting private trade overseas; the instructions of 3 October for the first mission to South-east Asia; the re-establishment of the Bureau of Maritime Trade; his comment on the arrival of the Muslim merchants from Siam and also his comment on taxing their pepper trade. We must bear in mind these instructions and comments when considering the two missions to Java, Samudra, and India in 1403, and Yin Ch'ing's mission to Malacca and Cochin. I believe we must separate them from the general explanations offered for the Chêng Ho voyages, which began only after the three missions had returned in 1405. We can then more readily accept the view that the Muslim traders had informed the court that Malacca was a flourishing commercial centre and that it was for the commerce of Malacca that the Emperor sent Yin Ch'ing there.

Finally, it must be noted that the Malacca envoys were received together with those of Samudra and Calicut. The *Yung-lo Shih-lu* says:

> On 3 October [1405], the ruler of Samudra, Zainal Abidin, the ruler of Malacca, Parameswara and the ruler of Calicut, Sha-mi-ti, sent envoys with the eunuch envoy Yin Ch'ing to pay tribute. An edict was promulgated appointing them all as kings; they were provided with seals and patents and also presented with suits of coloured silks.[22]

Thus on the same day, Malacca became a kingdom in the eyes of the Ming court together with the two older countries. A month later, Malacca envoys were entertained to a banquet with the Calicut, Samudra, and Java envoys.[23] Then, on 11 November, the Malacca envoys were received alone. In the words of the *Yung-lo Shih-lu*:

> On 11 November, Malacca was granted an inscription for the State Mountain. At the time, the envoys said that their king admired righteousness and wished to be like one of China's prefectures and annually offer tribute. The king asked that one of his mountains be designated the Grand Mountain of the State. The emperor commended this and ordered the officials of the Ministry of Rites thus, "The ancient rulers honoured the mountains and rivers, determined the boundaries, conferred nobility and set up feudal states in order to show special favour to distant peoples and demonstrate that no one is left out. We name the country's western mountain as the State Mountain and set up an inscription on it.[24]

The orders were followed by a long inscription with a verse at the end which Yung-lo had personally composed. The inscription states the moral and political philosophy of the imperial house and adds the emperor welcomed the new nation and recognized this by putting up the inscription on the Western Mountain of Malacca. The poem repeats the sentiment and ends with a hope that prosperity would reach the king's descendants.[25]

What is outstanding is the fact that Malacca was the first foreign nation to receive the emperor's inscription. Only three other nations went through the same ceremony, Japan in 1406 (three months after Malacca), Brunei in 1408, and Cochin in 1416.[26] But Malacca was the only one to receive this inscription with its very *first* mission to China. This was a unique experience for the Ming court and we need not wonder why Emperor Yung-lo viewed Malacca with great favour throughout his reign.

It is not likely, however, that Parameswara asked for this recognition without even waiting for his mission to return and report on the Chinese court. We may assume that Parameswara knew that Siam and Java both sent missions to China, and profited from them, and that various foreign traders at Malacca had informed him that China was wealthy and powerful. This knowledge would have been further confirmed by the arrival of the large mission of Yin Ch'ing in 1404 and its return to Malacca early in 1405 bearing the envoys of Calicut and Samudra. But it is doubtful that Parameswara should then ask, without any prior official contact, that his country be regarded as a feudal state of China; and it is certainly unlikely that he anticipated, or that Yin Ch'ing could have dared to promise, Emperor Yung-lo's exceptional personal concern. The evidence that we have points to a decision in China itself as being responsible for bringing Malacca under the emperor's protection.

Since the middle of 1403, the court had been showing increasing interest in coastal shipping and in relations with South-east Asian countries. In the months after sending Yin Ch'ing, there were several reports of piracy along the Fukien and Kwangtung coasts. On 29 February 1404 overseas travel was again prohibited in one more edict and the design of ocean-going vessels changed in order to keep the unauthorized traders at home. Two days later it was announced that a mission to the Western Ocean was being

planned, and five ships were ordered to be built for that purpose. On 9 June 1404 naval patrols on the Kwangtung coasts were ordered not to molest vessels bringing foreign missions to China. And during the months of September to December 1404, missions came from Java (both East and West), Champa, Cambodia, and Siam. Also, throughout all these months, relations with Annam were deteriorating, as Yung-lo agreed to interfere in the internal affairs of that country on behalf of the deposed Tran dynasty. Then Chinese officers had met the son of the Chinese leader of Palembang at some South-east Asian port and brought him to China, and on 20 February 1405 Yung-lo ordered a mission to Palembang. Finally, on 11 July 1405 Chêng Ho and the biggest expedition attempted yet was ordered to go to the Western Ocean. All these factors indicate that the Ming court was not content to wait for foreign trade but was actively extending its maritime influence.[27]

The background of Yin Ch'ing's own mission and Yung-lo's positive policies thereafter provides us with a probable explanation of the special status granted to Malacca in November 1405. Yin Ch'ing may have had no trouble in persuading Parameswara to send a mission, but it could not have escaped his notice that Malacca was a growing entrepôt and also well situated for trade with India. Malacca's need to be friendly with China was therefore complemented by China's need for a convenient trading centre and a safe route to India. Yin Ch'ing naval forces, I have suggested, arrived at the Yangtse about the time Chêng Ho was appointed leader of a new expedition in July 1405. It has been shown that Chêng Ho did not usually leave the Chinese coasts till the winter. Presumably he consulted the officers of the returned fleet about sailing conditions and the relative importance of various ports.

He certainly would have consulted Yin Ch'ing himself, a fellow eunuch, when Yin Ch'ing arrived in Nanking in late September or early October. During the thirty-nine days between Malacca's audience together with Samudra and Calicut (3 October) and Malacca's investiture alone (11 November), a great deal could have happened. Yin Ch'ing would have pointed out that Malacca was the youngest and perhaps weakest of the nations whose envoys were housed at the Hui-t'ung Kuan, but its port and its trade were no less important for that. A special recognition of Malacca would ensure that there would be a reliable and prosperous entrepôt in the Straits of Malacca. Both the emperor and Chêng Ho would have seen the logic of that, and the Malacca envoys could easily have been persuaded of the advantages of having a special status. They need not, in any case, have known exactly what their request meant in terms of the Confucian universal state.

There is reason to believe that the Malacca and other envoys returned to their countries in Chêng Ho's ships in 1406 and that Yin Ch'ing accompanied them at least as far as Malacca. At Malacca, when Yin Ch'ing arrived, "the king was even more pleased and treated him with greater respect".[28] Parameswara was shrewd enough to see that a special relationship would bring Malacca no harm but greatly add to his prestige. What was important was the size of Chêng Ho's fleet, the wealth in the ships' holds, and the trade the Chinese could bring.

This close relationship with China continued until 1435 when the Ming court finally abandoned Yung-lo's policy of state trading. By that time, Malacca's international position was unassailable. Also, by that time, the unusual beginnings of Sino-Malacca relations were, no doubt for different reasons, forgotten by the annalists of both countries.

Notes

I am grateful to the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, for the research associateship (1961–62) which made it possible for me to continue my work on fifteenth-century Chinese relations with Southeast Asia. It is fitting that this contribution is in honour of Sir Richard Winstedt, formerly Reader in Malay at the School.

1. The best account of the rise of Malacca is A. Cortesão, *The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires* (London, 1944), ii. 231–43. It is still not possible to determine the exact date of the foundation of Malacca, but there is no doubt that the preceding events occurred at the end of the fourteenth century.
2. W. P. Groeneveldt, "Notes on the Malay Archipelago and Malacca", *VBG* xxxix (1877); W. W. Rockhill, "Notes on the relations and trade of China with the Eastern Archipelago and the coasts of the Indian Ocean during the 14th century", *TP* xv and xvi (1914–15); J. J. L. Duyvendak, "Ma Huan re-examined", *VKAW*, xxxii (1933); P. Pelliot, "Les grands voyages maritimes chinois au début du xv^{e} siècle", *TP* xxx (1933), are the main works to make the Chinese sources known to the west. A recent translation of Ma Huan's and Fei Hsin's accounts of Malacca may be found in P. Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese* (Kuala Lumpur, 1961), 321–25.
3. All sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Chinese works draw either directly or indirectly from the *Yung-lo Shih-lu* and the two works of Ma Huan and Fei Hsin for material on overseas relations of Yung-lo's reign. Most of them have been examined by Pelliot and by Duyvendak in their various articles on the Chêng Ho voyages (*TP* xxx, xxxi, xxxii, xxxiv, xxxviii, and xlii), but they have not shown how much these works copied from the earliest source, the *Shih-lu*, and how much they copied from each other.

   The *Ming Shih-lu* survived in a number of more or less imperfect sets, including one in Cambridge, England, one in Princeton, and fragments in Paris; A. C. Moule and Chung Kei-won, "The Ta-Ming Shih-lu", *TP* xxxv (1939), 289–328. In 1940, during the war in China,

the thirteen sets in Nanking were published. This is the edition used here, though I have collated the material with the MS. edition of the Wade Collection in the Cambridge University Library. See also the recent study by Wolfgang Franke, "The veritable records of the Ming dynasty", in *Historians of China and Japan*, edited by W. G. Beasley and E. G. Pulleyblank (London, 1961), 60–77.

4. The *Yung-lo Shih-lu* (hereafter YLSL) was compiled mainly by scholars of the Hanlin Academy, who based their work on court diaries and various administrative reports and files of edicts and memorials in the Imperial Archives. The four senior editors were men who worked in the Imperial Secretariat under Yung-lo and specialized in handling policy documents; *Ming Shih* (Po-na pen edition, hereafter MS), ch. 152, 5b and 8b; ch. 169, 5b. Above these editors were three Supervisors of History and six Directors, nine of the highest officials of the empire, most of whom had been active during the whole of Yung-lo's reign. Two of the Supervisors had a hand in China's relations with South-east Asia — Chang Fu was the conqueror of Annam in 1406–07 and his victory was later pointed to as a warning to both Java and Siam (*MS*, ch. 154, 1b–5a); Hsia Yuan-chi was the President of the Ministry of Finance who supervised the financing of the early Chêng Ho voyages and later objected to the great expense involved in them (MS, ch. 149, 5a–7a). For the rules of selection of the *YLSL* and the list of compilers, see Introduction to *YLSL*, Fan-li, 5b, and Hsiu-tsuan kuan, 1a–5b.
5. Ma Huan, *Ying-yai Shêng-lan chiao-chu* (Peking reprint, 1955), 22, translated in Groeneveldt, *VBG* 123; Rockhill, *TP* xvi. 114. See also Duyvendak, *VKAW* 43. For the earliest date, 1403, see *MS*, ch. 325, 6a, translated in Groeneveldt, *VBG* 129.
6. *YLSL*, ch. 10A, 4b; ch. 11, 1a, 2a–b, 10a; ch. 12a, 8b.
7. *Hung-wu Shih-lu*, ch. 230, 5b–6a; ch. 231, 2b–3a; ch. 232, 6a–7b and 8b. For Siam missions, ch. 230, 6b; ch. 243, 3b; ch. 254, 7a; ch. 257, 5b. For Champa missions, ch. 250, 2a; ch. 257, 4b.
8. *Hung-wu Shih-lu*, ch. 252, 3a; ch. 254, 7b–8b. The emperor's comment on Sri Vijaya and the long letter to the king of Siam are to be

found slightly abbreviated in *MS*, ch. 324, 25b–26b, translated in Groeneveldt, *VBG*, 69–70.

9. *Hung-wu Shih-lu*, ch. 257, 4b, 5b, and 6a.
10. Hung-wu was succeeded by his grandson Chien-wên. This was unacceptable to Yung-lo who challenged the new emperor, his nephew, almost immediately the succession was announced. Yung-lo's victory over his nephew in July 1402 led to the destruction of records pertaining to Chien-wên's reign. The latest and most scholarly attempt to reconstruct the events of the four-year reign is by Wang Ch'ung-wu, *Feng-t'ien Ching-nan chi-chu* (Shanghai, 1948). But no materials on Chinese relations with South-east Asia, unfortunately, have survived.
11. *Hung-wu Shih-lu*, ch. 254, 7b. In MS, ch. 324, 25b, the text is an abbreviated one and leaves out "the merchants found this convenient" which I have italicized, and Pang-ha-la (邦哈剌) which might have been an earlier form for Bengal (Pang-ko-la 榜葛剌). The *MS* text is also less clear; cf. Groeneveldt's translation, VBG 69–70.
12. *YLSL*, ch. 12A, 8b.
13. Pelliot, *TP* xxx. 273–77 and 307–11, and Duyvendak, "The true dates of the Chinese maritime expeditions in the early 15th century", *TP* xxxiv (1939), 356–91, make it clear that Chinese voyages to the Indian Ocean waited for the north-east monsoon and left the Chinese coast at the end of a year or the beginning of the next year and then returned after being away for at least a year and a half. The mission of Oct. 1402, therefore, could not have returned much before the middle of 1404.
14. *YLSL*, ch. 23, 3a.
15. Ibid. 10a–b. This passage is abbreviated in *Kuo Ch'üeh*, 917, where the author mistakenly changes the name of the Haji from Ma-ha-mo Ch'i-ni (奇尼) to Ch'i-la-ni (奇剌泥), substituting for ni (尼) the name of his country of origin La-ni (剌泥). The *MS*, ch. 6, 2a, names La-ni as one of the countries which sent missions in 1403, and in ch. 326, 16a, quotes the *YLSL* passage in full but makes the same mistake as *Kuo Ch'üeh* about the Haji's name. The *MS* editors list in

the same passage ten other unidentifiable place-names, including once again the name of Ch'i-la-ni as that of a country. The editors were frankly puzzled and added to the confusion by recording in ch. 325, 14b, that a mission came from Hsi-yang So-li (Chola) which had the same trouble with the authorities over the tax on pepper. The error arose because of an entry in the sixteenth-century work, *Shu-yü Chou-tzŭ Lu* by Yen Ts'ung-chien (ch. 8, 25b), which says that So-li came with tribute in 1403 with Calicut and had trouble over the pepper tax (see Duyvendak, *TP* xxxiv. 356). In the *YLSL* there is no record of missions from either Calicut or So-li in 1403, and Yen Ts'ung-chien probably mistook Hsi-yang La-ni for Hsi-yang Ku-li which he understood to mean the two countries Hsi-yang (So-li?) and Ku-li (Calicut).

16. Pelliot, *TP* xxx. 327–29.
17. There is no conclusive evidence that Hsi-yang was ever used to mean So-li (Chola) during Yung-lo's reign. So-li does not appear at all in YLSL, while Hsi-yang, as I have shown in note 2 on p. 94, caused much confusion to later historians. Ma Huan, *Ying-yai*, 14, 17, 19, 35, 37, 38, 49, used So-li for south Indians or Hindus and Buddhists. Elsewhere in *Ying-yai* and in Fei Hsin, *Hsing-ch'a Shêng-lan Chiao-chu* (Peking reprint, 1954), Hsi-yang referred to the Indian Ocean.
18. Later Chinese chroniclers do not refer to the Muslims from Siam, presumably because they thought that these and the La-ni Muslims were all from Chola. I am unable to identify La-ni, although the little evidence that we have points to the Malabar coast, where Calicut was dominated by Muslim merchants. A tentative suggestion is that La-ni referred to Ponnani, south of Calicut, which Tomé Pires calls "a port with ships and merchants and a goodly town" which used to be more attached to the Calicut faction" (Cortesão, *Suma Oriental*, 74 and 79).
19. Cortesão, *Suma Oriental*, 240 f.
20. As two other missions were sent to the same places long before the first mission could have returned, it is not certain that the first mission left the shores of China. There is, however, a vague reference

to the emperor entertaining the envoys of "Hsi-yang" and Siam on 26 April 1405; YLSL, ch. 34, 5a. We do not know who was meant by "Hsi-yang" here. Were these envoys brought back from south India by the 1402 mission or were they more Indian Muslims arriving from Siam? In Table 1.2, Siamese envoys and Muslim traders were presented with gifts on 8 October (*YLSL*, ch. 37, 6a) and we are reminded of the Muslim traders from Siam of 22 October 1403.

21. *MS*, ch. 324, 25b; see note 3, p. 91 above.
22. *YLSL*, ch. 37, 5b; cf. *MS*, ch. 325, 6a–b, translated in Groeneveldt, *VBG* 129. In *YLSL* there is no mention of "the yellow umbrella".
23. *YLSL*, ch. 38, 3b. It is probably that Malacca envoys were also entertained on 21 October with Java, Calicut, and Samudra. Malacca could have been one of the "other nations" in *YLSL*, ch. 37, 8a.
24. *YLSL*, ch. 38, 4b. *MS*, ch. 325, 6b, omits the greater part of this passage, see Groeneveldt, *VBG*, 129.
25. *YLSL*, ch. 38, 4b–5b. Except for the poem at the end, the inscription is omitted from the *MS*, ch. 325, 6b. Groeneveldt does not translate the poem.
26. Japan on 6 February 1406; *YLSL*, ch. 40, 4b–6a, has the full text while *MS*, ch. 322, 5b, merely records that an inscription was prepared. The inscription was in recognition of Japan's help in curbing Wako piracy on the Chinese coasts.

    Brunei on 20 December 1408; both *YLSL*, ch. 60, 4b–6b, and *MS*, ch. 325, 3a–5a, have the full text. The inscription was partly in honour of the Brunei king's visit, and partly in honour of the king's son who became the new king when his father died at Nanking.

    Cochin on 28 December 1416; both *YLSL*, ch. 103, 6b–7b, and *MS*, ch. 326, 3b–4b have the full text, but there are several important variants in the *MS* text. The reasons for this inscription are not clear, except that the ruler of Cochin asked for it and the emperor never refused such requests. It is interesting to contrast Malacca and Cochin on this point. Yin Ch'ing visited both the countries in 1404, but only Malacca sent a mission and was immediately presented with

an imperial inscription. Cochin, on the other hand, sent missions in 1411 and 1415, but did not ask for special recognition until 1416.

27. Coastal piracy, *YLSL*, ch. 23, 8b; ch. 24, 11a–b; ch. 25, 2b and 7b. Overseas travel prohibition, ch. 26, 5b. New ships ordered, ch. 26, 6a. Kwangtung naval patrols order, ch. 29, 1b. Java and other missions, ch. 30, 5a–b; ch. 31, 1b, 3a–b, 9a; ch. 32, 7a. Annam relations with China, ch. 28, 4a, 6b–7a; ch. 29, 8b–9a; ch. 30, 6b–7a; ch. 32, 10a–b; ch. 33, 4a–b and 7b–8a; ch. 35, 8a–b; ch. 36, 3a–b. Relations with Palembang, ch. 33, 5a–b. And Chêng Ho's order, ch. 35, 6b. I have given detailed references because most of the material cannot easily be found in a work like the *MS*, and many interesting items are omitted in *Kuo Ch'üeh*.
28. *MS*, ch. 325, 6b. The *YLSL* does not record Yin Ch'ing's return to Malacca, but the *Kuo Ch'üeh*, 953, specifically states that Chêng Ho was sent to acknowledge the tribute from Calicut, Malacca, and other countries. *Kuo Ch'üeh* puts this as part of Chêng Ho's order on 11 July 1405, but this is not likely, as Calicut and Malacca did not present tribute until nearly three months later. T'an Ch'ien probably knew that Chêng Ho visited Calicut and Malacca and saved space by including this fact in the first order to Chêng Ho.

Chapter 2

THE FIRST THREE RULERS OF MALACCA

Wang Gungwu

For 50 years since 1897, scholars who have worked on early Malacca history have struggled with the discrepancies about the first three rulers in the Malay, Chinese and Portuguese sources. The most important contributions towards deciding the names of these rulers and the length of their reigns were made by Wilkinson, Rouffaer and Winstedt and, during the period 1920–1935, it became clear that, despite many difficulties in reconciling the Malay and Portuguese materials, the chronology given in the Chinese sources had to be accepted. Winstedt then suggested the following in his History of Malaya published in the *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* in 1935:

Parameswara founded Malacca; d.ca.1414
|
Muhammad Iskandar Shah, d.1424
|
Sri Maharaja, d.1444

Then, following the publication of Tomé Pires' *Suma Oriental* in 1944, Winstedt became dissatisfied with his 1935 list and in

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1947–1948 published two short articles which proposed that Parameswara and Iskandar Shah were one and the same person and that the change of name in Chinese sources suggested that Parameswara became a Muslim about 1414.[1] This interpretation was soon incorporated into revised editions of *Malaya and its History* and *A History of Malaya* and the list now reads:

Parameswara, later Megat Iskandar Shah, d.1424
|
Sri Maharaja, d.1444

The key arguments Winstedt used to reject the Chinese account about Megat Iskandar Shah (*Mu-kan-sa-yu-ti-er-sha*) being the son of Parameswara were

(a) "The (Chinese) annalist, not having met the Malay visitor or understood Malay, naturally took this ruler to be different from Parameswara."
(b) *Sejarah Melayu* (1536) says that Iskandar Shah reigned 3 years in Singapore and 20 in Malacca, and this fitted the Chinese dates 1403 and 1424, a 20 year period between Malacca's foundation and the death of *Mu-kan-sa-yu-ti-er-sha*.
(c) *Suma Oriental* (1512–15) says that Xaquem Darxa became a Muslim at 72 and died 8 years later. Again, this approximates the Chinese dates 1414–1424 if the ruler was converted in 1414. Also, while it was likely that the founder was an old man before he died, it was not possible for his son, "almost a man at the founding of Malacca" to be so old in 1424.

In Winstedt's second short article, he quoted Professor Pelliot to show that a number of Chinese *secondary* sources were not consistent and therefore Chinese dates could not always be relied upon.

Winstedt's did not reject Chinese chronology. On the contrary,

even his second and third points depended on the dates given in the Chinese sources. His only quarrel with the Chinese material was that, for 1414, the Chinese were wrong in recording that that Parameswara had died and was succeeded by his son Megat Iskandar Shah.

Christopher Wake in 1964[2] has already shown that there is no reason to reduce the list of early Malacca rulers by one because the Portuguese sources mention only two rulers before Sultan Muzaffar Shah. The Chinese sources list four and the Malay materials list at least four. In fact, if Parameswara was Xaquem Darxa, it would appear that there was only one ruler before Modafarxa. The various records and the several interpretations may be clearly seen in the lists in Table 2.1.

Winstedt's interpretation really stands or falls by the accuracy of the Chinese record for the year 1414. Did Megat Iskandar Shah go to China to report his father's death and his own succession to the throne or were the Chinese annalists wrong? To establish that the Chinese record is unlikely to have been wrong about this, although the annalists themselves would not have met the Malacca rulers and did not know Malay, it is necessary to go to the *primary* sources for this subject. These are the *T'ai-tsung (Yung-lo) shih-lu*, the Veritable Records of the Yung-lo reign (1402–1424) in 130 chuans, the *Jen-tsung (Hung-hsi) Shih-lu*, the Veritable Records of the Hung-hsi reign (1424–25), in 10 chuans, and the *Hsuan-tsung (Hsuan-tè) Shih-lu*, the Veritable Records of the Hsuan-te reign (1425–35) in 115 chuans. The first two were compiled between 1425 and 1430 and the third was completed in 1438, all these from the official records in the Imperial Archives.

From these Veritable Records, we are able to find out the exact dates each foreign mission had audience with the Ming emperors, the names of some rulers and their envoys and the conditions under which some of the missions were sent to China. The most

TABLE 2.1
The First Rulers of Malacca

Sejarah Melayu A. 1536 version	***Sejarah Melayu B. 1612 version***	***Bustan-al-Salatin (1638)***	***Suma Oriental (1512–1515)***	***D'Albuquerque Commentaries***
I. Sultan Iskandar Shah; reigned 3 yrs. in S'pore and 20 in Malacca	I. Iskandar Shah; reigned 32 years in S'pore and 3 in Malacca	I. Sri Rama Adikerma, Raja Iskandar Shah; last king of S'pore, first of Malacca	I. Paramicura; 5 years in S'pore 6 years in Muar, then died at Bertam	I. Parimicura; died 7 years after founding Malacca
II. Raja Kechil Besar, Sultan Megat (s/o I); reigned 2 years	II. Raja Besar Muda, Raja Ahmad (s/o I)	II. Raja Besar Muda, Raja Ahmad (s/o I)	II. Chaquem Daraxa (s/o I); became Muslim at 72, died at 80 (at 45, went to China, 3 years' journey)	II. Xaquendarxa (s/o I); became Muslim. (3 years' journey to China, died few days after return)
III. Raja Tengah, Sultan Muhammed Shah (s/o II); reigned 57 years	III. Radin or Raja Tengah (s/o II)	III. Raja Tengah (s/o II)		
IV. Raja Ibrahim, Sultan Abu-Shahid (s/o III); reigned 17 months	IV. Raja Kechil Besar, Sultan Muhammed Shah (s/o III)	IV. Raja Kechil Besar, Sultan Muhammed Shah (s/o III)		
	V. Raja Ibrahim, Sultan Abu Shahid (s/o IV); reigned 17 months			
V. Raja Kassim, Sultan Muzaffar Shah (half b/o IV); reigned 40 years	VI. Raja Kasim, Sultan Muzaffir Shah (half b/o V); reigned 42 years	V. Raja Kasim, Sultan Muzaffar Shah (s/o IV)	III. Sultan Modafaixa (s/o II)	III. Sultan Modafaixa (s/o II)

(*continued*)

TABLE 2.1 (continued)

Yung-lo Shih-lu & Hsuan-tè Shih-lu (1425–1430) (1438)	*Winstedt (1948)*	*Wake (1964) [cf. Wilkinson, Rouffaer and pre-war Winstedt]*
I. Pai-li-mi-su-la 拜里迷蘇剌 (died early 1414 or late 1413)	I. Parameswara — later Megat Iskandar Shah (died in 1424)	I. Sri Parameswara (ca. 1400–1414)
II. Mu-kan-sa-yu-ti-er-sha 母幹撒于的兒沙 *or* I-ssu-han-ta-er-sha 亦思罕答兒沙 (died late 1423 or early 1424) (s/o I)		II. Megat Iskandar Singh, Raja Besar Muda (1414–1424) (s/o I)
III. Hsi-li-ma-ha-la-che 西里馬哈剌者 (died before 1444) (s/o II)	II. Sri Maharaja (died 1444)	III. Sri Maharajah (?Iskandar Shah) Mohamed Shah, Raja Tengah Raja Kechil Besar (1424–1445) (s/o II)
IV. Hsi-li-pa-mi-hsi-wa-er-tiu-pa-sha 息力八密息瓦兒丟八沙 (Mentined in 1445)	III. Raja Ibrahim, Sri Parameswara Dewa Shah; (murdered ca. 1446) (s/o II)	IV. Sri Parameswara Dewa Shah, Raja Ibrahim (1445–1446) (s/o III)
V. Su-lu-t'an-wu-ta-fo-na-sha 速魯檀無答佛哪沙 (mentioned in 1455)	IV. Raja Kasim, Sultan Muzaffar Shah (d. ca. 1456) (half b/o III)	V. Sultan Muzaffar Shah, Raja Kasim (1446–1459) (s/o III)

relevant information has been tabulated [in Table 2.2] for easy reference.

What is immediately clear is that the record of Megat Iskandar Shah's visit to Peking in 1414 to report his father's death and his own succession cannot be singled out as doubtful without calling into doubt the whole basis of Chinese official chronology. There are a number of background points which are worth noting as the start.

Firstly, the daily public activities of the Chinese emperors were a matter of the highest importance in the imperial system. It was necessary to record exactly what the emperor had to do each day, his words and his decisions being specially important and therefore carefully put down.

Secondly, the officers handling this work of recording the emperor's affairs were centrally directed and the materials were centrally preserved. At the end of each reign, the senior ministers were ordered to examine all the materials and prepare a history of the reign in chronological order. The final work, the *Veritable Records*, would be presented to the new emperor.

Thirdly, tribute from foreign peoples had a significant place in the imperial scheme and considerable care was taken to accommodate the missions, to present them to the emperors and to show appreciation of their coming. Special departments were involved and senior ministers and administrators all took part in the elaborate ceremonies accompanying the presentation of tribute and the visits of foreign rulers.

Fourthly, Emperor Yung-lo and, to a lesser extent, Emperor Hsuan-tè were personally interested in the relations between China and foreign countries. Hence the meticulous details about all such relations in the *Veritable Records* compiled during their reigns.

Fifthly, the records show that Malacca had a special importance as long as Chinese fleets were sailing to the Indian Ocean and

TABLE 2.2
Malacca Missions and Royal Visits to China (1405–35)
(The Royal visits are printed in bold letters)

Year	*Date & place of audience with Ming emperor*	*Name of Malacca ruler*	*Name of Malacca envoy*
1. 1405	October 3 (Nanking)	Pai-li-mi-su-la	No mention
2. 1407	October 2 (Nanking)	No mention	No mention
3. 1409	February 16 (Nanking)	Pai-li-mi-sula	A-pu-la-chia-hsin (Abdullah Kassim?)
4. 1411	**August 14 (Nanking)**	**Pai-li-mi-su-la (also Pa-er-mi-su-li)**	**—**
5. 1412	July 27 (Nanking)	Pai-li-mi-su-la	Hsi-li-sa-ma-lan-cha-ya (Sri Samalan Jaya?) nephew or ruler
6. 1413	September 20 (Peking)	Pai-li-mi-su-la	Sai-li-la-che (Sri di-Raja?) another nephew of ruler
7. 1414	**October 5 (Peking)**	**Mu-kan-sa-yu-ti-er-sha**	**—**
8. 1415	October 11 (Peking)	No mention	No mention
9. 1416	November 19 (Nanking)	No mention	No mention
10. 1418	September 3 (Peking)	Mu-kan-sa-yu-ti-er-sha	Sa-li-wang-la-cha (Sariwang-raja?) elder brother of ruler, another son of Parameswara
11. 1419	**September 23 (Peking)**	**I-ssu-han-ta-er-sha**	**—**
12. 1420	October 19 (Peking)	Mu-kan-sa-yu-ti-er-sha	Tuan-ku-ma-la-shih-ti (Tuan Kumarajati or Tuanku Marajati?)
13. 1421	February 26 (Peking)	No mention	No mention

TABLE 2.2 (continued)

Year	*Date & place of audience with Ming emperor*	*Name of Malacca ruler*	*Name of Malacca envoy*
14. 1423	October 24 (*Heir Apparent*) (Peking)	No mention	No mention
15. 1424	**April 20 (Peking)**	**Hsi-li-ma-ha-la-che**	**—**
16. 1424	December 20 (Peking)	No mention	Na-la-ti-pa-na (Naradewana?)
17. 1426	June 17 (Peking)	Hsi-li-ma-ha-la-che	I-ssu-ma (Ismail)
18. 1431	March 20 (Peking)	No mention	Wu-pao-chih-na (?) a *t'ou-mu* (chief)
19. 1434	**May 26 (Peking) Arrived Nanking November 28 1433 Left Canton after April 28 1435**	**Hsi-li-ma-ha-la-che**	**—**
20. 1435	April 11 (Peking)	Hsi-li-ma-ha-la-che	La-tien-pa-la (Radin Bala), ruler's younger brother

that the Chinese were very concerned with what was happening in the Straits of Malacca.[3] The succession of rulers in Malacca was certainly vital to the emperors during the period 1405–1435, and the officials concerned were not likely to have been careless about this matter.

There was, however, during this period one development which could have led to errors and omissions in the records. This was the decision to move the capital north from Nanking to Peking. This was a complicated task and it took a number of years to complete. During his reign, Emperor Yung-lo was away from Nanking twice and left Nanking for good in 1417:

1. February 23, 1409 – December 7, 1410 (one year and nine months)
2. March 17, 1413 – November 14, 1416 (three years and eight months)
3. After April 12, 1417 (until his death on August 12, 1424).

From the start, special arrangements had to be made for a dual government. Major decisions and all audiences with the emperor were at Peking while routine matters were left with the heir-apparent at Nanking during the emperor's absence. These arrrangements were planned as early as August 21, 1408, and were carried out until Peking was officially made the capital in October 28, 1420, and the heir-apparent and his son arrived from Nanking to the new capital on January 28, 1421.

Foreign missions from the south still went through Nanking on their way to Peking. They had an extra month's travelling to do, not counting delays arising from a divided administration. But there did not appear to have been disruptions in the stream of foreign missions from all directions, especially in the spectacular missions brought by Cheng Ho on his way back to China. From a detailed examination of the records, I have no reason to doubt that the record of the audiences held was accurate.

With this background, let me survey briefly the Malacca missions prior to 1414 (see Table 2.2):

1. This first mission accompanied the eunuch Yin Ch'ing back to China and returned to Malacca with the first Cheng Ho expedition of late 1405. Emperor Yung-lo sent a poem-inscription to the ruler of Malacca.

2. This mission was brought to China by Cheng Ho's fleet. It complained about Siam and Emperor Yung-lo warned Siam to leave Malacca alone. It returned to Malacca with Cheng Ho's second expedition of 1407.

3. This mission arrived early, probably with part of Cheng Ho's second fleet returning from Java to China. It returned to Malacca with Cheng Ho's third expedition in 1409.

4. This was the first royal visit which included the ruler, his consort, his son and a retinue of 540 persons. They went to China with Cheng Ho's third fleet. They stayed for two months at Nanking. Details about banquets, gifts and the audience with the emperor were fully recorded. It is not recorded when the royal entourage returned to Malacca; probably a special fleet accompanied them home.

5. This mission, led by a nephew of Parameswara, probably arrived with a fleet bearing a mission from Bengala and returned to Malacca with Kan Ch'uan's fleet to Bengala. The mission stayed more than three months in Nanking.

6. Another nephew of Parameswara led this mission; the mission, consisting of 165 persons, had an audience with the emperor at Peking. It probably returned to Malacca with Cheng Ho's fourth expedition of 1413.

This leads me to the royal visit of 1414 at Peking. The brief entry in the *Yung-lo Shih-lu* for October 5 reads as follows: "The Malacca King's son *Mu-kan-sa-yu-ti-er-sha* came to court, and memorialised that his father *Pai-li-mi-su-la* had died. An edict (was promulgated) that *Mu-kan-sa-yu-ti-er-sha* should succeed his father's rank as king and presents were given of gold, silver, brocades and fine silks, headgear and belts and robes of woven gold-thread."

The following points may be made about this royal visit:

(a) The king and his entourage left for China after Cheng Ho's expedition of 1413 had been to Malacca. It is probable that the king then travelled to China with a part of Cheng Ho's

fleet, the main part of which went on to India and West Asia and returned to China in 1415.

(b) *Pai-li-mi-su-la* may have died in early 1414 or in late 1413, before Cheng Ho's fleet arrived.

(c) Cheng Ho's fleet arrived in Malacca in early 1414 and found a new ruler — there must have been many who could confirm that the old ruler had died and some of them would have accompanied the new king to China. Perhaps Cheng Ho persuaded the king to travel immediately and have his succession recognised and his position strengthened.

(d) The reception at Peking for the new king appears to have been simple compared with his father's in 1411. This may be explained by the fact that Yung-lo had been personally commanding troops on the northern frontiers from April to August just before the new king arrived. Throughout the year, banquets were few and gifts sparingly given; the main court was still at Nankng and Yung-lo had only a handful of senior officials with him at Peking.

(e) The inscription made by Cheng Ho in 1431, on his seventh and last expedition, says that the Malacca ruler personally brought his consort and son to the Ming court in 1415. This discrepancy in dates (the *Shih-lu* says 1414) probably arose because the ruler and entourage travelled back with part of Cheng Ho's fleet in 1414 and therefore were included with the main part of Cheng Ho's fourth expedition which returned to China in 1415. It may also mean that the king was still in China in early 1415. Although there is no record of the king's time of departure home to Malacca, it is likely that the journey south from Peking to Nanking and then to the coast would have taken several months and that the king did not leave until early 1415.

(f) There is no real possibility of any error about Parameswara's death and about Megat Iskandar Shah's succession. Too many officials apart from the emperor himself had met Parameswara and his family in 1411 and would have met Megat Iskandar Shah in 1414; also many of them, including the emperor, met Megat Iskandar Shah again when he made his second visit to China in 1419. In addition, many, like Cheng Ho and his officers, had actually been in Malacca in 1413–15 and again in 1417–19 and 1421–23.

This now leads me to survey briefly the other missions and royal visits which came after 1414.

8. This mission and a large numer of other missions arrived in China together with the Cheng Ho fleet. It may have returned to Malacca with the Chinese mission to Bengala led by Hou Hsien at the end of 1415.

9. It is not known how this mission arrived in China. It returned to Malacca with Cheng Ho's fifth expedition in 1417. As we have no clear data on this and the previous mission (October 1415 and November 1416), it is even possible that the same mission of 1415 stayed on until 1416 and had another audience with the emperor before returning to Malacca.

10. This mission was led by a son of Parameswara, an elder brother of Megat Iskandar Shah. There is no record of how it arrived in China and how it returned to Malacca.

11. This was the second royal visit of Megat Iskandar Shah. He, his consort, his son and officials arrived with Cheng Ho's fleet together with sixteen other missions from Sumatra, India and West Asia. Two points deserve comment:

(a) The king's name was recorded as *I-ssu-han-ta-er-sha* and Megat (Mekan) was omitted. The omission may be due to the fact that

17 missions arrived together and the name was abbreviated and freshly transcribed into Chinese characters. As the king who sent the next mission in 1420 was still given a *Mu-kan-sa-yu-ti-er-sha*, I do not doubt that the same person was referred to. The elaborate receptions, the audience with the emperor, the complaints against Siam by Malacca and the request for assistance all show that the Chinese must have known him as the King who first came in 1414. The alternative transcription of the king's name may also be seen as the result of the scribe's neglect to check earlier reports.

(b) Further confirmation that the new king of 1414 was the son of Parameswara can be seen in the letter of October 3, 1419 from Emperor Yung-lo to the new king of Siam. The relevant parts reads as follows:

> Recently, the King of Malacca, Iskandar Shah succeeded to the throne and followed *his father's wishes*. He personally came with his wife and son to the court with tribute… Furthermore, the king of Malacca depends on us and is therefore an officer of our court. If he has done anything wrong, there should have been reports to us. Not to do this but to hastily resort to arms is to ignore our court.

It is not known how Megat Iskandar Shah and his entourage returned to Malacca; they may have travelled with the Chinese mission sent to warn Siam to leave Malacca in peace.

12 and 13. These may have been the same mission having two successive audiences with the emperor in October 1420 and February 1421. There is not enough data to explain them as two separate missions. If they were the same mission, the mission probably came together with the Samudra mission in 1420 and return to Malacca with Cheng Ho's sixth expedition in 1421.

14. This mission arrived with the Chinese fleet (Cheng Ho may have returned himself earlier in 1422) together with 15

other missions. It is of interest because it did not get an imperial audience. The emperor was away on campaign along the northern frontiers from August to December 1423, and the mission had to be content to be received by the heir apparent. This also confirms how meticulous the *Shih-lu* can be about the emperor and foreign missions.

15. This was the royal visit of another new ruler in 1424, this time Sri Maharaja reporting his father's death and his own succession to the throne. The entry in the *Yung-lo shih-lu* for April 20, 1424, reads:

> The Malacca King *Si-li-ma-ha-la-che* brought his consort and chiefs to court with a tribute of local goods; this was because his father had died and he had newly succeeded to the throne.

The audience was with the Emperor Yung-lo, who had now met *three* kings of Malacca. It was one of the last audiences he gave to foreign missions. Yung-lo gave Sri Maharaja a farewell banquet on April 30 and himself left on his last northern campaign two days later (he died while on campaign three months later).

Having now shown that Malacca must have had *three* kings by 1424 and that the same Chinese emperor received and entertained all three of them, I shall be brief about the remaining missions of the period 1424–35. I have included them here in order to point out that the third king, Sri Maharaja, visited China once again in 1433–35 and stayed almost two years. Before he went to China again, there had been two changes of emperors. Yung-lo died in August 1424 and his son and successor Hung-hsi in May 1425. Sri Maharaja sent one mission to Hung-hsi in December 1424 and one to Hung-hsi's son and successor, Hsuan-tê, in June 1426. The 1431 report on Siamese threats was not actually sent by an official mission. Three men arrived from Malacca asking for help against Siam and a letter of warning to Siam was despatched through

Cheng Ho when he set out on his seventh and last expedition. It was this expedition which brought Sri Maharaja, his family and Raden Bala, his younger brother, and a retinue of 228 persons to China in 1433. He then had to wait until the middle of 1435 before he returned to Malacca. He was away for at least two and a half years and was still in China when Emperor Hsuan-tê died in January 1435.

One point must be emphasized. All three kings of Malacca were transported to China in Chinese ships following some of the Cheng Ho expeditions. Malacca needed help against Siam and China needed a base for fleets to the Indian Ocean. This was a sound basis for 30 years of close relations between Malacca and China. After 1434, the Chinese decided to withdraw from active involvement in overseas affairs. No Chinese fleets thereafter sailed to Malacca and no other kings of Malacca ever visited China again. Sri Maharaja was the last king to make the visit and it was an extended one because no Chinese shipping was available to send him and his entourage home. He must have seen clearly the change in Chinese policy and realised that Malacca must how fend for itself against Siam and other potential enemies. But after 30 years of Chinese protection, Malacca was obviously ready to look after itself and it did so with increasing confidence and success for the remainder of the century.

In conclusion, the first three rulers of Malacca established strong foundations for the new kingdom through skilful diplomacy and an enlightened trading policy. That there were three rulers who should be given credit for this success can no longer be doubted. It is essential that all the history books now in use in the country be corrected and Megat Iskandar Shah be restored to his rightful place as the second ruler of Malacca. The list should now read:

Parameswara (Iskandar Shah), 1390–1413/14
|
Megat Iskandar Shah, 1414–1423/24
|
Sri Maharaja (Sultan Muhammad Shah), 1424–1444?

Notes

Annual Lecture of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society given at the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, 11 February 1968.

1. R.O. Winstedt, "The Malay Founder of Medieval Malacca", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, xii/3 and 4 (1948), pp. 726–29; "Malay History from Chinese Sources", *BSOAS*, xiii/1 (1949), pp. 182–83.
2. Christopher Wake, "Malacca's Early Kings and the Reception of Islam", *Journal of Southern Asian History* 5, no. 2 (1964); 104–28.
3. Wang Gungwu, "The Opening of Relations between China and Malacca, 1403–5", *Malayan and Indonesian Studies*, edited by J. Bastin and R. Roolvink (Oxford, 1964), pp. 87–104. For a broader picture of China's policies towards Southeast Asia during the early Ming, see my "Early Ming relations with Southeast Asia — a background essay" *The Chinese World Order*, edited by John K. Fairbank (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), pp. 34–62; and my "China and Southeast Asia, 1402–1424", to be published in a memorial volume of essays for Victor Purcell, edited by N. Tarling and J. Chen.

Chapter 3

DID ZHENG HE SET OUT TO COLONIZE SOUTHEAST ASIA?

By Tan Ta Sen

In recent years, with the approach of the 600th anniversary of Admiral Zheng He's maiden expedition to Southeast Asia, some historians began to re-examine the nature and impact of the Admiral's expeditions. Lectures, articles and books have been published and many more are still being published. These publications and activities have enriched our understanding of the subject matter. While some writers argue the positive aspects of the Zheng He voyages, others are critical, and even consider Zheng He as an aggressor and a colonialist.

Dr Geoff Wade, a senior visiting research fellow at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, belongs to the latter. He presented his theory that is contrary to many scholars' view. He is of the opinion that Admiral Zheng He's voyages were aggressive and colonialistic in nature — in fact, acts of invasion.

This essay examines some of the arguments presented by Dr Wade in his article entitled "Ming China and Southeast Asia in the 15th Century: A Reappraisal"[1] and his seminar at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) as reported in the *Straits Times*[2]

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and *Lianhe Zaobao*.[3] I will concentrate on his arguments regarding Zheng He's expeditions to South and Southeast Asia. Wade argues that:

1. Zheng He was a territorial expansionist of the Ming Dynasty, a proto-colonialist;
2. He led a fleet and established bases, colonies and commercial strongholds in Southeast Asia, similar to those of the Portuguese;
3. He launched military actions in Sumatra, Java, Palembang and Ceylon during his seven expeditions to the West Ocean.

In short, Zheng He's seven expeditions to the West Ocean were colonizing expansion and invasion, no different from the Portuguese colonization and invasion in the 16th century. Dr Wade has based his arguments on the Chinese sources, to which he added his own interpretations. He mentioned various events to substantiate his views. My essay also uses mainly Chinese sources but comes to a different conclusion. Let us start with the composition of the Zheng He fleets.

GRAND FLEET

Dr Wade is of the view that, of the 300 or 400 ships, the "majority" were warships, and among the 28,000 men on board, the "majority" were military servicemen. He has not disclosed his source of information about the so-called "majority" claims. However, many historical sources show that Zheng He's fleets consisted of a variety of ships; for example, treasure ships, transport ships, cargo ships, passenger ships, warships and so on, but none has mentioned that the "majority" were warships.

In fact, there was no strong maritime power within the trading zones of East Asia and Southeast Asia in the 15th century that

warranted Zheng He's bringing along a great number of warships. At that time, the formerly great empires like Majapahit of Java and Srivijaya of Sumatra had already declined and even disintegrated into small states. Meanwhile, in the vast ocean, piracy abounded. If not supported by some troops, Zheng He during his first voyage in 1407 might have been defeated by the pirate chief Chen Zuyi of Palembang.

Therefore, those military servicemen were meant for self-defence and to protect the valuable gifts and commodities on board and not for invasion. According to archival records, upon arrival at a native state, Zheng He first read out an imperial decree and bestowed gifts of jewellery, silks and porcelain on the native ruler. Thereafter, trading activity was conducted.

The main task of the seven Zheng He voyages was not to mount military action, but to project the glory and the Ming China (*xuan yang guo wei*), to establish the Confucian Order with the neighbouring states and to promote trade through a tributary system.[4]

MILITARY ACTION BY ZHENG HE'S TROOPS ON JAVA ISLAND

What about Zheng He's encounter in Java — was it military action? A Ming source, *Shuyu Zhouzhilu* by Yan Congjian, states:

> In the 4th year [of the reign of Emperor Yongle], the Ruler of the West sent tributes like pearls and coral while the East Ruler was sent horses. However, the two were at war, and the Ruler of the East was killed. At that moment, our mission was passing through the city of the East Ruler, the West Ruler killed 170 of our men. The West Ruler sent a messenger to say that the East Ruler should not have been installed and had therefore been killed. The West Ruler was severely reprimanded with a decree. In the

> 5th year (1407), the West Ruler Dumaban asked for forgiveness and was prepared to compensate 60 thousand taels of gold. He also consented to accession of the son of the East Ruler. It was consented. In the 6th year (1408), the West Ruler Dumaban paid tribute of 10 thousand taels of gold as a token of apology for his wrongdoing. The Minister of Rituals said that he had owed us 50 thousand taels of gold and asked an official to deal with him in accordance with the law. The Emperor noted, 'It was sufficient if people in far lands feared punishment for their crimes. We were not interested in his gold! As long as he was remorseful for his crime, paying gold as compensation was not required.'[5]

The narrative above reveals that Zheng He's staff were not wilfully killed and Zheng He had not sent troops in revenge. He had just submitted the case to seek the Emperor's decision. There was no military action, and certainly no invasion.

ZHENG HE'S MILITARY ACTION IN PALEMBANG

According to a report written by Zheng He's interpreter Ma Huan who accompanied him on the trip, "During the 5th year of the reign of Emperor Yongle (1407), the Emperor sent Eunuch Zheng He to lead a fleet of treasure ships and arrived at this place. A certain Shi Jinqin, originally from Guangdong, reported the atrocities committed by Chen Zuyi. He was arrested by Eunuch Zheng He and together with others was brought back to the imperial court for execution."[6]

Similarly, the *Ming Shi* (The history of the Ming dynasty) records, "During the 5th year (1407), Zheng He returned from the West Ocean. The Emperor sent for him... Zuyi plotted to rob Zheng He by pretending to surrender. A certain Shi Jinqin informed Zheng He of the conspiracy. Zuyi was captured when he mounted an attack. He was presented to the Emperor and was executed."[7]

At that point in time, Palembang was in name a vassal state of Majapahit. But in fact, the port of Palembang was governed by several Chinese. Chen Daoming and Chen Zuyi were the pirate chief and *kangzu* [port master] respectively. After Zuyi was defeated, Emperor Ming Chengzu (Emperor Yong Le) established a peace mission in Palembang and appointed Shi Jinqin to be the commissioner there. It was like the Secretary for Chinese Affairs or Consulate. Nevertheless, Palembang remained as a vassal state of Majapahit; there was no change of suzerainty.

This helped clamp down on piracy and thus was good for the maritime trade and Majapahit. Zheng He had not sent any troops to occupy or invade the place.

MILITARY ACTION TOWARDS SAMUDRA

Samudra/Pasai was a small native state on the island of Sumatra. It is near today's Banda Aceh. The *Ming Shi* states:

> The ruler of Samudra was killed by a certain Batak king in a battle. As his son was too young to revenge, … a fisherman … thus led troops to defeat the Batak king … As agreed the wife of the Samudra ruler married the fisherman and made him the king. … In the 10th year during the reign of Emperor Yongle (1412) … the grown-up son of the former ruler conspired with troop leaders to murder his stepfather, the fisherman, usurped the throne and ruled the native state. The fisherman had a son called Sekander who escaped with his men and formed a settlement on a hill. In revenge he launched attacks frequently. In the 13th year during Yongle's reign (1415), Admiral Zheng He with his fleet of treasure ships arrived and captured Sekander …[8]

At the request of the ruler, Zheng He quelled the rebellion. Once the rebellion was over he left the native state. To call him an invader and colonialist was most unreasonable.

MILITARY ACTION IN CEYLON

The military action in Ceylon is interesting but it is far from a clear-cut invasion.

The *Ming Shi,* vol. 304, p. 7767 mentions:

> In the 9th month of the 6th year (1408) when Zheng He was passing by Ceylon again, the king Alakeswara lured Zheng He into the country and demanded gold and silk while he sent troops to rob Zheng He's ships. Realizing that most of the king's troops were out, Zheng He led 2000-odd men and took the town by surprise. The king and his family members were captured. The ship robbers, on hearing of the attack, rushed back to town but they were badly defeated by the imperial troops. In the 6th month of the 9th year (1411), captives were presented to the imperial court. The Emperor granted them amnesty and spared their lives. They were released and sent back to their native state.[9]

Based on the above records, it appears that Zheng He mounted the military attacks in self-defence. It should also be pointed out that Emperor Yong Le had not executed the captives as he had done in the case of the pirate chief Chen Zuyi. Instead, he sent them home and installed another native to be the king. In addition, there was no occupation of the native state. This episode should therefore not be regarded as a military invasion.

THE DEPOTS ESTABLISHED BY ZHENG HE AT VARIOUS PLACES WERE COLONIES

Dr Wade argued that the Guan Chang (government depots) were in fact military bases or colonies. However, he did not substantiate his argument.

Ma Huan in his *Yingya Shenglan* provides a detailed description of the depot at Malacca:

FIGURE 3.1
Guan Chang, Malacca.

Source: Concept Presentation Book for Cheng Ho Cultural Museum, Malacca, Malaysia. Author's personal collection.

> Whenever the treasure ships arrived there, they erected fences like a city wall and four clock towers with gates. There was patrolling at night by guards carrying bells. Within the fences there were more layers of fences, like a small town. A strong-room and warehouse were built to keep money, valuables and food. After all the ships returned from other countries, exotic products were packed and stored in the ships. They were waiting for the south monsoon for the homeward journey in the middle of the 5th month.[10]

It was clearly a warehouse, and not a military base or a colony.

OCCUPYING STRATEGIC STRONGHOLDS ALONG THE EAST-WEST ROUTE

Dr Wade maintained that Zheng He had seized the strategic trading strongholds along the East-West route from the Arabs and controlled the trading zones between the East and the West. "This action was identical with that of Portugal in their efforts of expanding their trading network." (Quoted in Wu Xinhui, see endnote No. 3.) It ought to be noted that during Zheng He's time there were many ports of call from Middle East's Jazireh Hormuz to India's Calicut, Sumatra's Pasai/Samudra, Malacca, Palembang and so on. These were trading centres between the East and the West. They were ports of call for the Arab, Persian, Indian, Malay and Chinese traders. Zheng He had not colonized them or occupied them by troops. This was the result of the joint efforts made by various nations in promoting international trade. If Dr Wade claimed that Zheng He occupied these strongholds along the East-West route for his own use, he should subtantiate it by giving proof that ships of other flags were not allowed to pass through those ports.

ZHENG HE AS SEEN THROUGH WESTERN EXPERIENCES

In his article, Dr Wade argued that the Ming had invaded the northern and southern part of China under the Yuan Dynasty, including areas like Yunnan, Xinjiang, and Annam. He put together the Ming's "expansion" within what is now the territory of China and the Zheng He expeditions to the West Ocean. I am of the view that these were two different situations and should not be lumped together. From the Ming emperor's view, those were actions of "reunification" within China's own territory, not invasion.

Dr Wade in his article argued that the Ming Dynasty in general and Zheng He in particular employed strategies such as invasion, occupation, persecution, exploitation and killing of innocent people, divide and rule, using barbarians to attack barbarians etc. in his missions.[11] He implied that a hundred years later, Western colonizers copied these strategies and applied them to the region. From the Westerners' perspective, it is incomprehensible that Zheng He with such a big fleet of ships was not out to expand and invade territories. If Zheng He did not have designs on others' territories, why did he mobilize so many men?

Indeed, with such a big fleet of ships under him, Zheng He could have easily conquered the 30 states or more that he visited then. But he had not done so. Instead he helped numerous small native states to defeat external invasion and crush domestic rebellion. Why? This must be viewed from the Ming perspective arising from the Ming's feudal social and economic developments. Unlike the Western commercial and industrial nations, the Ming Dynasty was an agrarian economy and society — there was no need to seize natural resources, markets, manpower and colonies.

When Zhu Yuanzhang came to the throne, he proclaimed the ban on overseas travel and opposed foreign trade. He actively promoted a pro-agriculture economic policy and discriminated against commerce. Furthermore, right from the beginning, the Ming Dynasty promoted Confucianism and Zhu Di's foreign policy was a manifestation by the Confucian ideology.

From the 6th century B.C., according to Confucius, China was the centre of the world and the Middle Kingdom of the universe. Apart from the Middle Kingdom, the rest of the world was undeveloped and occupied by barbarians. It was not worth conquering them.

The founding Ming Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang in his opening imperial decree stated:

> All barbarian foreign states beyond the mountains and sea are located at secluded corners of the universe. To capture them would prove futile as they are unable to give us adequate supplies of staple food and any attempts to civilize their people are insignificant. If they fail to know their strength and invade us, it will be unfortunate for them. It will also be a bad omen for us to mount military action against them if they pose no threat to China. Just because China is rich and strong and just to enjoy a moment's satisfaction in defeating others, there is no rhyme or reason for such military action causing their people to suffer casualties — we must remember that we must not do that.[12]

It added, "The rulers of China and barbarian states, far and near, should be kind to each other equally; Adopt a friendly policy towards neighbours, and all will live in harmony as well as enjoy peace and happiness."[13]

He had also designated the following states as friendly neighbouring states not to be invaded: Korea, Japan, Big Ryukyu, Little Ryukyu, Annam (Vietnam), Chenla (Cambodia), Siam

(Thailand), Samudra, Java, Pahang, Baihua(?), Srivijaya and Brunei. (Malacca was not founded yet.)

This indicates that the Ming Empire was contented to be a Middle Kingdom with a vast territory, rich in natural resources, large population, and a most advanced civilization at that particular time. It also learned the historical lessons from the Yuan Dynasty when the Mongolian troops were engaged in numerous wars. Hence, he laid down a fundamental national policy: peaceful diplomacy. In fact, Zhu Di's foreign policy was an extension of the Han and Tang dynasties' peaceful diplomacy during the heyday of their reigns. The Han and Tang dynasties had attained their prosperous heyday due to this peaceful diplomacy policy.

Emperor Ming Chengzhu basically inherited Zhu Yuanzhang's foreign policy except that he relaxed the policy banning foreign trade. "He implemented a government-conducted trade policy."[14]

This was the main objective of Zheng He's great expeditions to the West Ocean. Of course, China also took the opportunity to show off its might and win their hearts with kindness. Therefore, in the 21st year during the reign of Yong Le (1423), Zhu Di gave a directive to all civilian and uniformed officials, "If the barbarous states are faithful to us, China would enjoy peace. But we must not be complacent. You all must be united and respect Heaven, love the people and work hard in carrying out duties aimed to beckon them to keep peace."[15]

Ming Chengzu's pacification policy was aimed at "educating" the foreigners with graciousness.

TRIBUTARY TRADE AND WESTERN COLONIALISM

The idea of tributary trade evolved from the social relationship between the ruler and the subject.[16] The emperor as a suzerain felt that all under Heaven are imperial territories, and "all subjects

of the world pay tribute to the emperor".[17] Thus, for prestige reasons, the tributary transactions should be conducted in favour of the tributary states. Generous gifts were given to vassal states. During the early Ming period, the country suffered from a deficit as it gave away too much to the "vassal states". The so-called vassal states were in name only. Throughout the Ming Dynasty, it had not stationed any troops in the vassal states nor occupied territories.

The vassal states were obligated to pay tributes but *nothing* would happen to them if they failed to send tributary missions. The benefits of sending tributary missions far exceeded that of not sending. Besides getting gifts of gold, silver and other valuables, they had the Ming empire as patron to protect them. Therefore, numerous native states, big or small, came to pay tributes to the throne. So the Ming throne maintained peace with them and treated them well. It opposed invasion. This was in line with its economic policy based on an agricultural economy. Thus, under this political system, the suzerain was only symbolic. At the most it had satisfied the ego of the feudal emperor. How was it similar to Western colonialism?

"Colonialism is the theory or practice of establishing control over a foreign territory and turning into a 'colony'. Colonialism is thus a particular form of imperialism … Colonialism is usually distinguished by settlement and by economic domination. As typically practised in Africa and South-East Asia, colonial government was exercised by a settlement community from a 'mother country' who were ethnically distinct from the 'native population'."[18] Foreign relations during the Ming Dynasty, especially during the Zheng He period, cannot be fitted into such a concept. Yet, Dr Wade argued that both Western colonialism and the Ming "tributary system" are the same.

ZHENG HE, THE EXPANSIONIST AND INVADER?

In fact, Dr Wade is not the first one to label Zheng He an expansionist and a colonizer. Thirty years before him, the then Russian expert on Zheng He, Dr Bokwahan, had raised this point. Initially, Dr Bokwahan regarded Zheng He's expeditions as a "long march" aimed to expand the tributary states, which had diplomatic links with China.[19] However, after he compared it with the Western prototyped colonizers, he modified his argument. He stated that the Chinese suzerainty model was not thorough and comprehensive right from the beginning as Zheng He had never left behind a single ship or a single troop. So this sort of relationships was symbolic, in name but not in reality. It was not comparable with the prototyped colonizers of the West.

Indeed, if we take a closer look, when the Western colonizers arrived at a place, they not only conquered and stationed troops, but also killed the natives. For instance, after the Portuguese had occupied Malacca, they killed 10 thousand people out of a population of 15 thousand. The aborigines of South America almost became extinct. The eight-nation international force that invaded Beijing, looted the city and massacred thousands of people. Had Zheng He behaved the way they did?

During the Sino-Vietnam conflicts in 1979, Pan Hui Li of Vietnam said in his article, "Two thousand years' resistance against Bejing's expansion in retrospect", "(Zheng He) enticed more than 30 countries in this region to pay tribute to the Empire with military threats, money and diplomacy. For those countries [that] defied him, he sowed discord and sabotage to prepare for annexing them by force".[20]

In 1988, it was reported that a great deal of Zheng He's relics and artifacts were found in some parts of the Spratly Islands.

Ruan Wen Sheng of Vietnam published a book entitled *Huang Sha, Chang Sha*. He wrote:

> In the 15th century, a Ming's envoy Zheng He visited the West Ocean seven times and reached Southeast Asia and other neighbouring countries with the objective of power expansion and territorial occupation. Wherever Zheng He went, he coerced native rulers and people.[21]

From the above examples, it is clear that Dr Wade was not the first person who called Zheng He a colonialist and expansionist. It is curious, though, that Dr Wade has never mentioned these sources nor these works in his article and seminar. This created an impression that he was the first historian who held this view. It is also worth noting that the portrayal of Zheng He and Ming China as an aggressor and colonialist was presented during the period when Sino-Vietnamese or Sino-Soviet relations were at odds.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Dr Wade attempted to reinterpret the role of the Ming Dynasty in general and Zheng He's expeditions in particular, based on Chinese historical records, using a Western perspective. He was imaginative and very selective in arguing his cases but it was not adequately supported by the historical records.

Zheng He was an admiral in the Ming Dynasty. He was instructed by the Ming Emperor to project the power of Ming China (*xuanyang guowei)*, and to implement the tributary system to the West Ocean. However, he conducted his diplomacy in the context of the Chinese concept of World Order and the tributary system. His expeditions should be seen in that context rather than that of Western colonialism. There is always a danger to see history from the a-historical point of view; forcing a Western

model into Chinese history is dangerous and will only distort historical facts.

Notes

1. Geoffrey Wade, "Ming China and Southeast Asia in the 15th Century: A Reappraisal", Asia Research Institute, Working Paper no. 28, July 2004.
2. Terence Tan, "Admiral Zheng He 'set out to colonise Southeast Asia'", *Straits Times*, 11 November 2004.
3. Wu Xinhui, "Jinian Zheng He xia xiyang, benqu geguo gezhi biaoshu,"吴新慧," 纪念郑和下西洋, 本区各国 '各自表述' ," *Lianhe Zaobao* 联合早报, 12 November 2004.
4. There are many interpretations on the reasons for Zheng He's expeditions. Some argued that he was instructed by Ming Cheng Zu 明成祖 to look for Ming Hui Di,明惠帝 — the emperor whom Ming Cheng Zu overthrew — who fled China to Southeast Asia, and at the same time, to show the strength of China overseas and spread the Confucian order; others argued that it was for establishing the tributary system. The tributary system is often interpreted as a type of the trade system. See Liang Qichao 梁启超, "Zhuguo Da hanghaijia Zheng He Zhuan," 中国大航海家郑和传 first published in 1904, reprinted in Wang Tianyou 王天有 and Wan Ming 万明 eds. *Zheng He yanjiu bainian lunwen xuan* 郑和研究百年论文选, Beijing: Peking University Press, 2004, pp. 1–8; also Tong Shuye 童书业, "Conglun 'Zheng He xia xiyang de maoyi xingzhi" 重论"郑和下西洋"事件之贸易性质, first published in 1937, republished in Wang Tianyou and Wan Ming, eds. op. cit., pp. 60–67; also *Zheng He xia xiyang*, 郑和下西洋Beijing: Renmin Jiaotong Chubanshe, 1985. It seems that the political and economic reasons cannot be separated.
5. Yan Conjian (Ming)(明) 严从简, *Shuyu Zhouzilu,* 殊域周咨录 (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Co., 2000), pp. 294–5; *Ming Shi* 明史, (Beijing: Zhunghua Book Co. 1974) vol 323, p. 403 has similar narrative.

6. Ma Huan, 马欢*Yingya Shenglan* 赢涯胜覽 (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Co., 1955), p. 17.
7. *Ming Shi,* vol 323–32, p. 408.
8. *Ming Shi,* vol 323–32, p. 27. Gong Zhen 巩珍, *Xiyang Fanguozhi,* 西洋番国志 (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Co.), p. 18 also carries similar story; Ma Huan, op cit., pp. 27–28; Fei Xin 费信, *Xingcha Shenglan* 星槎胜覽 (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Co.), p. 27, contains a similar story.
9. *Ming Shi Zu Shilu* 明世祖实录 vol .77; Fei Xin, op. cit., p. 30; Yan Congjian, op. cit., pp. 309–12 have similar description.
10. Wade, op. cit., pp. 15–24.
11. Ibid.
12. *Ming Taizu Shilu* 明太祖实录, vol. 125.
13. Ibid.
14. Wang Gungwu, *A Short History of Nanyang Chinese* (Singapore: Malayan Publishing House, 1959), p. 7.
15. *Ming Taizu Shihlu*, Vol. 127, p.128
16. The most recent study on the tributary system is Li Yunquan 李云泉 *Chaogong zhedu shilun* 朝制 度史 , (Beijing: Xinhua Shudian, 2004).
17. Ibid., p. 62.
18. Andrew Heywood, *Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1997), p. 116.
19. I would like to thank Dr K. K. Tan for providing me with the information on Dr Bokwahan and his argument. According to Dr Tan, Bokwahan published a book entitled, *A Chinese empire in early 15th century*, (Moscow: n.p., 1976).
20. Pan Hui Li, "Two thousands years' resistance against Beijing's expansion in retrospect", in *Da Tuanjie Zhoukan* 大团结周刊, 1979, Nos. 29 and 30. Cited in *Journal of Yunnan Normal University* 云南师范大学学报 1994.
21. Ruan Wen Sheng (Vietnam) 阮文胜, *Huang Sha, Chang Sha* 黄沙, 长沙, (Ho Chi Minh City: Youths Publishing House, 1988).

Chapter 4

CHINESE ELEMENT IN THE ISLAMIZATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIA
A Study of the Story of Njai Gede Pinatih, the Great Lady of Gresik

Tan Yeok Seong

SHIH TA NIANG TZI PI NA TI, THE GREAT LADY OF GRESIK

In early 1949 when I was investigating some reproductions of the *Lih Tai Pao Ann*, 歷代寶案 the Dynasty Documentary Records of Ryukyu, I happened to come across a peculiar and interesting name written in these characters: Shih Ta Niang Tzi Pi Na Ti 施大娘子俾那智. It is the name of a grand old lady living in Palembang in the Kingdom of Sri Vijaya. According to the records mentioned above, she was a member of the family of Shih Chin Ching, the Pacifier of Kukang 施進卿歸港宣慰使 installed by Cheng Ho during his first voyage to the Western Ocean in 1405. Was there

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any one who had heard of this name or was any mention made of it in Chinese records? I searched in vain.

One night, as I was turning over the pages of the voluminous works of Sir Stamford Raffles' *History of Java*, a name flashed before my eyes; Niai Gedi Pinateh. At last, I had found her.

Niai Gedi Pinateh, variously written as Njai Gede Panate (Veth), Njai Gede Pinatih (Aboebakar) and Nji Ageng Pinatih (Tomb stone) etc., stands for the Grand Old Lady, Pinatih in English. It is a perfect Malay rendering of the Chinese Shih Ta Niang Tzi Pi Na Ti. There could be no better.

Raffles found in Javanese records the story of this great lady, which though highly coloured, is nevertheless basically true. I quote:

> Maulana Ishak, otherwise called Maulana Alul Islam Pasi Malacca, a celebrated Pandita, who had given himself up to penance and mortification, having heard that there was at Ampel, on Java, a prince who was busily employed in propagating the Mohamedan religion, and that many persons, through his means, had embraced the faith, went over and assisted Sunan Makdum in the work of conversion: and having received his sanction to go to Balambangan, for the purpose of teaching the Mohamedan religion, they embarked in a prahu, and set out on the sacred mission.
>
> It happened that at this time the chief of Balambagan was greatly distressed on account of his daughter, who was very sick, and whose malady would not yield to the power of medicine. One night a voice from heaven told him, that if he would have his daughter speedily recover he must send her to Gunung Patukang'an, where there would be found a Pandita from Sabrang, who would cure her, and afterwards become her husband.
>
> A storm arising, the prahus, in which Maulana Ishak had embarked was driven close to the foot of Gunung Patukang'an,

and he landed there, when the Chief, having sent his daughter to the mountain, directed that the Pandita might be conveyed thither, in order that the prophecy might be fulfilled. Maulana Ishak first objected to undertake the cure, on the plea that he was not skilled in medicine, but at last agreed to comply, on condition that the chief would embrace the Mohamedan religion if he were successful. To this the latter consented, on which Ishak, addressing the prince, said, 'I am not a person skilled in medicine, neither do I know how to administer it, but if your daughter would be well she has now only to wish herself so'. The princess immediately recovered.

The prince afterwards bestowed upon the Pandita his daughter in marriage, and she soon acquired a thorough knowledge of the tenets of Mohamedanism.

On one occasion, when the prince was sitting in the hall of audience before all his people, the Pandita went up to him and reminded him of his promise to become a Mohamedan, adding that he was ready to instruct him in the doctrine of that system. On this the prince became angry, and told him in haughty terms that he would never change his religion. No sooner had he spoken than his mouth was distorted. At this, however, he only became the more exasperated, and approaching the Pandita, was going to strike him, when his legs gave way under him and he fell to the ground.

The Pandita, returning to his wife, took leave of her, exhorting her to adhere to the religion he had taught her, and telling her that he must now proceed upon the mission on which he had originally embarked. Though desirous of accompanying him he would not permit her. After he was gone the land was afflicted with a pestilence which carried off great numbers of the people.

The prince, greatly vexed, and enraged at the havoc thus made among his subjects, told his minister that it must be consequence of his daughter being pregnant by the Pandita; and

that as soon as the child should be born he was determined to make away with it.

The Almighty, however, took the child under his special protection, and it was safely conveyed to Gresik in a trading vessel, where it was brought up by Niai Gede Pinateh, until it was twelve years of age; when, turning out a promising boy, she resigned him to Raden Rachmat, then called Sunan Ampel, for the purpose of his receiving religious instruction. The Sunan soon discovered the boy was of Arab descent, and gave him the name of Raden Paku, observing that he would one day become the *pepaku* (that is, the support-nail, or axle) of Java; he subsequently gave him his daughter in marriage.

Raden Paku, accompanied by Makdum Ibrahim, son of the Sunan, proceeded on a pilgrimage to Mecca; but touching at Pasi Malacca, they were there presented to the great and holy teacher, Maulana Alul Islam who persuaded them, instead of prosecuting their voyage, to return to their own country, in order to make converts and become great and glorious; and giving to each of them an Arab turban and a long gown, at the same time conferred upon them the names of Prabu Suswata and Prabu Anyak Kraswati. He moreover told them, on their return to Gresik, to erect a mosque at Giri.

On reaching Ampel, after their return to Java, the Sunan informed Raden Paku that the holy man to whom he had been presented at Pasi Malacca was his own father, and that by obeying his instructions in building a mosque at Giri he would fulfil a prophecy, and he and his companion become great princes in Java.

Raden Paku then went to Giri, and having cleared a spot, a mosque and dwelling were soon erected. Numerous proselytes being attracted thither, he was called Prabu Satmate, and sometimes Susunan Ratu Ainul Yakin, but more commonly Sunan Giri. He was afterwards appointed by the king of Majapahit to be

> chief of the province of Gresik, in the same manner as Susunan Ampel had been previously appointed. He was born in A.D. 1355. Prabu Anyak Kraswati, his companion, afterwards assumed the title Susunan Bonang, under which name he was a distinguished character in subsequent transactions.

The name of Njai Gede Pinatih lies deep in the mind of the Indonesian people, they delight in her strange story and all that of her adopted son, Sunan Giri, the greatest Saint of all the nine Saints. Here are some of the tales that Raffles omitted to mention:

When the king of Blambangan plotted to kill Maulana Ishak, Almighty God intervened and saved him from the evil intention of the powerful ruler and he escaped to Pasai. His wife was pregnant at the time:—

Not long afterward the princess gave birth to a baby boy who was immediately floated down the sea alive, and not killed at birth, as has been the original plan of the king, as a revenge on Maulana Ishak. The mother was so overwhelmed with grief that she roamed the jungle and died without leaving a trace.

The baby in the box, adrift in the rough seas, with a happier fate than his mother had done. He was picked up by a merchant ship belonging to a woman by the name of Nyai Gede Pinatih of Gresik. The ship was on her way to Bali, the story goes; when one dark night she suddenly seemed out of control and went round and round in the sea. Upon investigation the helmsman noticed a box drifting towards the ship. When brought up and opened, the sailor found in it a new born baby. Thus the child was saved and the ship continued on her way to Bali. To the great surprise of all on board, she reversed to Gresik at full speed. When the baby was surrendered to her care, Njai Gede Pinatih was the happiest woman on earth. She brought him up to the age of

sixteen (Raffles says twelve) with all the motherly love she could bestow, and named him Djokiosmemurdo. He had his education and religion upbringing from Sunan Ampel, a great friend of his father (Maulana Ishak); who named him Raden Paku.

Raden Paku easily became one of Sunan Ampel's most able and clever students. Later he and Sunan Ampel's son planned to go to Egypt for further studies; but was met at Malacca by his father who taught him all the religious knowledge and other educational subjects under the sun.

When he grew up he became a most honoured businessman, educationist and religious teacher, much to the pride of his adoptive mother, Njai Gede Pinatih. He became Sunan Ampel's son-in-law and also married the daughter of the Raja of Majapahit. He then sent his two lovely wives to his adoptive mother in Gresik who welcomed them joyously as her daughters-in-law.

There are many strange stories about Raden Paku's youth, where he traded on behalf of Njai Gede Pinatih. One of them tells of his journey to Bandjar (Kalimantan-Borneo). When he was 23 years old he was ordered by his adoptive mother to sail to Kalimantan together with a skipper by the name of Kambodja or Abu Hurairah, in three ships, loaded with agricultural products of Java. When he reached the harbour of Bandjar the townsmen came in crowds to trade on board the ships. They did not pay cash at once, but were given ten day's credit. Those who were poor and unable to pay in cash were allowed to take the goods away, nevertheless.

Paying no heed to Kambodja's objections, Raden Paku answered simply, "If we get no money, we can consider the goods as alms given by Njai Gede. May be some of the goods were not fit for sale because tithe had not been paid in respect of them, therefore we can consider those goods that are not now paid for, as tithe."

Skipper Kambodja became confused and worried. He was responsible to his mistress, jointly with her adopted son. The goods in the three ships were empty, money had not come in, and credits were not paid. Time for them to return had arrived and skipper Kambodja become increasingly concerned.

In the end, Raden Paku ordered that the ships be filled with stone and sand as stabilizer. They sailed back to Gresik.

When they reached Gresik, Nyai Gede was told of what had happened and she was very angry. But Raden Paku with respect went to his mother and invited her to inspect the cargo of the three ships. How surprised the old lady was when she saw the three ships were heavily loaded with goods that were greatly needed by the people of Gresik, i.e. ratan and wax. Njai Gede then knew that her child was not an ordinary person but a man whom God had honoured, and thenceforth Njai Gede Pinatih gave alms, and paid tithes. These sums were used to build mosques and to maintain students in religious schools.

As he grew older, Raden Paku lost interest in business. He wanted to reach the highest attainment in life; to become a Saint. For forty days and forty nights he lived in isolation and prayed to God. God answered his prayer and after his ordeal he attained his Sainthood.

Then he built a large mosque on top of the Giri mountain in Demak in Indonesia, and later numerous other mosques. He became known as Wali (Saint) Sunan Giri. Millions of people from all over Indonesia and the neighbouring islands of the Rhio Archipelago followed his teachings and the interpretation of Islam. He was the most honoured of all the honourable teachers, the most pious of all the pious hermits and among the saints, the most feared by the pagans who fought against Islam. To the Muslims, he was the most honoured businessman, teacher, preacher, arbitrator and the most sought-after saint. He died on Gunung Giri and the place became the "Mecca of the East."

Sunan Giri, the Saint of Saints, as we know would not have attained such eminence if his education had not been carefully supervised by his adopted mother, Njai Gede Pinatih. Raffles tells: "She was the wife of the Pateh, or Minister of Kamboja who on account of her being great sorceress was banished to Java, where, on her arrival, she went to the King of Majapahit and implored protection. The king taking pity on her, the more so as she was a woman of advanced age without any children, and had been removed from a situation where she had once been comfortable and happy, provided for her a kind of shahbandar (chief of the port) at Gresik, where there was already a mosque and a considerable population. Njai Gede afterwards became very religious and charitable, and was revered for becoming the foster-mother of Sunan-Giri. Her death took place forty-five years after that of Mulana Ibrahim, being a short time previous to the destruction of majapahit, and her tomb is still to be seen at Gresik."

Prof. P. J. Veth says that, "Njai Gede Panate had been married to Kjai Sambadja, regent of Madjapahit, and had, after the death of her husband, settled down in Grissee and there adopted Islam as her religion. He further states that the Javanese greatly honour the memory of Njai Gede Panate and today still many go to pray at her tomb in the kampong Kaboengseen, in Grisse."

Today, in Gresik, there stands the mosque of Demak which was built by these Saints centuries ago. To the north of it are the graves of the Sultan of Demak together with 60 others. Among them the tomb of "Njai Ageng Pinatih" can still be seen.

Raffles' Kamboja is a corruption of Sambadja. Veth's version is correct. Njai Gede Pinatih came from Sambadja or San Fu Chi 三佛齐 in Chinese.

Now, let us return to the *Lih Tai Pao Ann* of the Dynastic Documentary Records of Ryukyu. There are some eight governmental dispatches between the two states, Palembang and

Ryukyu for the period from 1428 to 1440. We are not prepared to go through them thoroughly but let us just catch a glimpse of them. In 1428 the king of Ryukyu sent an envoy led by one Sit Tat Lu 實達魯 to Kukang (Chiu Kang 舊港). Both his credentials and the shipping licence are preserved in Vol. XLII p. 2 of the Pao Ann. Sit Tat Lu also brought with him a personal letter from the premier of Ryukyu addressed to the Minister of Kukang 舊港管事官 which is also preserved therein. It discloses that in the 19th year of Yong Lo (1421) Master Shih Arya Chih Sun of Kukang 施主烈智孫 sent to Japan a mission consisting of some twenty persons led by Na-jhuda Teng Tze Chiang 那弗答鄧子昌. These groups of people were shipwrecked and later conveyed to Ryukyu by Yuen Tao Cheng and officer in Kyushu, Japan 日本九洲官源道鎮 to arrange for shipping facilities to return to Kukang. However they were repatriated in transit through Siam.

I should like to add here that Shih Chin Ching established trade relation with Japan in his early days. A Japanese record tells us that on the 22nd day of the 6th month of the 15th year of Yin Yong 应永 1406 4th year of Yong Lo, a king by the name of Ah Lit Chin Ching 帝王亞烈進卿 sent tribute to the king of Japan. Japanese scholars have identified this king as Shih Chih Ching of Kukang, and Ah Liat for Ali in Arabic. But I think Arya is more commonly used in Indonesia as title.

This Shih Arya Chih Sun, the Master of Kukang is no other than Shih Chi Sun 施濟孫 the son of Shih Chin Ching mentioned in the History of Ming, from which we learned that he applied to the Court of Ming in the 22nd year of Yong Lo (1424) to succeed his father as Shuan Wei Shih of Kukang 舊港宣慰使. As shown in this Ryukyu record he had in fact assumed power as chief of Kukang as early as 1421. Shih Chin Ching might have died earlier than that. On pp. 25–28, Vol. XLII is a letter by Premier Huay Chi 琉球國王相懷机 to Seng Ah La Wu of Kukang the Kingdom of San Fu Chi,

三佛齊國舊港僧亞剌吳 in 1430. This name may be rendered into Malay as Kyai Arya Wu. It is followed by a letter dated 1430 also by Premier Kuay Chi addressed to Pun Mu Niang of Pao Lin Pang of San Fu Chi Kuo 三佛齊國寶（林）邦本目娘. A reply to this letter in the following year (1431) was written by the Pun Tau Niang 本头娘 of Pao Lin Pang of San Fu Chi Kuo. I am tempted to join the two names into one to read as Pun Tau Mu Niang 本头目娘. This woman was the head or mistress of Kukang and was at this at the height of her power, for Shih Chi Sun had quit the scene. Ma Huan described how Shih Er Chieh 施二姐 succeeded her father to rule the country and rewards, punishments, and appointments were all made by her. She ruled as a Tau Mu Niang (female chief) 头目娘. This was what Ma Huan witnessed during Cheng Ho's last visit to Palembang in the 6th year of Suan Te (1431). His evidence was supported by these documentary records of Ryukyu. Another document appeared on pp. 37–39 in the volume is a letter to the Premier of Ryukyu from the "simple woman" of Palembang 寶林邦愚婦 Pi Na Ti Shih Ta Niang Tzi. 俾那智施大娘子

In 1438 two dispatches were recorded in the Pao Ann 1) a letter from the Premier to the Minister of Kukang and 2) from the same writer to Shih Ta Niang Tzi. In 1440 another two letters marked the close of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Both the documents were given by the Premier, one to Pun Tau Niang and the other to Shih Ta Niang Tzi. Henceforth the names of Kukang and San Fu Chi disappear totally from the records and Malacca and Sumatra occupy a conspicuous place in their stead.

It would be most inappropriate for me to dwell upon the subject of the *Pao Ann*. It is a treasure within which lie buried the invaluable materials that once unearthed, would untie many hard knots in the History of South East Asia.

Veth states that Pinatih was married to Kjai Sambadja. Kjai also written as kyai means a religious teacher or leader in Indonesia. For

the "Seng Ah La Wu" which appears in *Lih Tai Pao Ann*, we propose to reinstate it as Kyai Arya Wu and San Fu Chi as Sambadja.

Raffles says that Pinatih was the wife of the Pateh or the minister of the country. Pateh is written as Pa Ti 八諦 in the *Ming Shih*. Kjai Sambadja is therefore our Kukang Khuan Shi Kuan 舊港管事官 in the *Pao Ann*.

After the collapse of the Kingdom of Sri Vijaya or Sambadja the King of Majapahit commissioned a minister to Palembang who looked after religious and civil affairs. Seng Ah La Wu or Kyai Arya Wu and the Kukang Khuan Shi Kuan or the Pateh of Palembang could have been one and the same officer who was given various designations by foreigners. Let us now examine the Shih family; Shih Chin Ching had two (or more than two) daughters. Pinatih, the elder; and perhaps the wife of Chiu Yan Chen 邱彥誠 the other Er Chieh, the second Shih Chi Sun might have been the only son. Shih Chin Ching died sometime before the 19th year of Yong Lo (1421). After his death the family split up into various cliques. Er Chieh became the ruler. Chi Sun struggled for power and appealed to the Court of Ming for recognition. His brother-in-law, Chiu Yan Chen was on his side. A calamity had befallen the family, and the personal interference of Cheng Ho became inevitable. This was the main object of his sixth voyage to Si Yang, which was confined only to Palembang. His visit was of short duration; he left China in the first month of 1424 and returned early in the eighth month of the same year. What did Cheng Ho achieve? Apparently he failed in his mission. Er Chieh remained in power, Chi Sun was not heard of, and Pinatih, the eldest child was in exile. This was what Ma wuan saw on his last visit to Si Yang in 1431.

We know that when Njai Gede Pinatih moved to Java, she was made a Shahbandar at Gresik by the King of Majapahit. This was an important job, for she was the link between the ruler and the

foreign traders and also responsible for the collection of anchorage fees and import and export duties. Recently there has been much discussion of the institution of Shahbandar in our circle of studies. This subject must be viewed in the context of the Shih Po 市舶 system in China. Possibly the two had a common origin.

CONCLUSION

Piecing this evidence together in the light of our historical knowledge, we now have a vivid picture instead of the one which was once so confused and so blurred. The great Sri Vijayan empire had fallen, and the Kingdom of Majapahit rose at this period to its highest pitch of wealth and glory. Several states in Sumatra (among them Palembang) had obtained protection from the new king but had no regular government. Chinese historians tells us that territory was in the hands of Chinese chieftains. They preferred to retain the name of Sri Vijaya or San Fu Chi as we see from the correspondence quoted above. Palembang became a base of operation for expansion towards the eastern spice islands. Eventually, new ports like Tuban, Jaratan and Gresik sprang up under Chinese influence. The "New Village" 新村 in Gresik became a nucleus of an important entrepot of spice trade in east Java. When this "New Village" was built, Palembang became the "Old Port" or Kukang and its role in the spice trade deteriorated.

Shih Chin Ching came to Palembang or Kukang at this juncture and became a petty chieftain among his fellow adventures. He had been struggling for power since his early days against the notorious pirate, Chen Chu Yi 陳祖義. He had no difficulty in securing the favour and support of Cheng Ho, the Muslim Admiral. His appointment as Kukang San Wei Shi after Chan Chu Yi was overthrown, made him the Chinese Overlord in the southern regions. The relationship between Cheng Ho and Shih Chin

Ching must not be belittled for, as we know when the family was in trouble after Shih Chin Ching's death, it sought the personal intervention of the aged eunuch.

These early Chinese settlements were peopled by Chinese Muslims who had created a sphere of influence for themselves with the co-operation of Cheng Ho. Religion and trade then went hand in hand. Chinese economic activities survived many political upheavals in the course of the past 600 or 500 years. But the Chinese contribution to the Neo-religious movement was interrupted and has long been forgotten.

In spite of the very flourishing Arabo-Persian trade since about 10th century Islam remained stagnant for many centuries in Malaysia. But in the post-Mongolian era it flashed from one end of the archipelago to the other with a swiftness that has perhaps no precedent in religious history. Through Islam the Muslims, in spite of their racial differences became masters of trade; while, on the other hand, successful maritime trade helped to spread Islamisation. In other words, Islam spread, with traders and along the international trade routes. *The Chinese settlers of this period were pioneers of both these enterprises. They had been Muslims and had established for themselves Islamic settlements at important trade centres*, such as Palembang and Gresik. From these centres a process of converting the indigenious people was begun. The present study attempts to illustrate a pattern of the forces. The Chinese element could indeed be considered as one of the driving forces or "paku" in this new movement of Islamisation in Malaysia. Muslims came to believe heartily in their religion and to live according to its precepts. When large scale conversion of the local people began to occur, the Chinese Muslims were overshadowed. Then a new wave of immigrants from China reached the shores of the islands in the early nineteenth century. *Unlike their forefathers, the*

newcomers were peasants carrying with them a different religious faith. Although the Chinese Muslims had left the scene by then, within the veins of the local people there still flows the blood of those heroes and heroines. "Within the Universe the Muslims are one family." 天下回回是一家

Chapter 5

ZHENG HE, SEMARANG AND THE ISLAMIZATION OF JAVA
Between History and Legend

Leo Suryadinata

INTRODUCTION

Although there are a number of studies on Zheng He's voyages, many questions still remain unresolved. For instance, how many countries did Zheng He visit? How far did his fleets go? When did he die and where was he buried? Did he really visit Semarang as many Chinese in Java believe? What was the role of Zheng He's fleets in the spread of Islam in Indonesia in general and in Java particularly? This paper discusses two related aspects, i.e. Zheng He's visit to Semarang and his roles in the Islamization of Java.

Traditionally, when studying Zheng He in Southeast Asia in general and in Java in particular, most studies have been based on the following Chinese sources: *Ming Shi-Lu* 明实录, *Ming Shi* 明史, *Yingya Shenglan* 瀛涯胜览, *Xingcha Shenglan* 星槎胜览, *Xi yang fanguozhi* 西洋番国志, and *Wu bei zhi* 武备志.[1] The first two were

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the official histories of China, while the rest (with the exception of Wu Bei Zhi, which is a map by an unknown drawer) were written by officials who traveled with Zheng He. Understandably, when speaking of the places that Zheng He visited, one has always referred back to the above sources.

Indeed, the Chinese sources often give detailed records about Zheng He's expeditions, the places that he and his fleet visited, the events that they had experienced, and interactions that they had with the countries in Southeast Asia. In the past, it is assumed that these were the only reliable and comprehensive sources for studying Zheng He, his voyages and activities. The assumption was that these records were written by Zheng He contemporaries; that they recorded all the events and were truthful without much prejudice. However, in recent years, scholars have begun to wonder if these records are really exhaustive and non-selective, and whether one should only rely on these sources simply to gain an understanding of Zheng He's activities in Southeast Asia and beyond. Have local historical sources, oral history, historical legacies and other evidence been found in Southeast Asia? Are they also useful for understanding Zheng He in the region? These questions are addressed after an examination of what has been recorded in the Chinese sources on Java in the early 15th century.

ZHENG HE'S VISITS TO JAVA

The traditional Chinese sources contain information about Zheng He's visits to Java, but one of the most cited sources is none other than *Yingya Shenglan* by Ma Huan 马欢.

According to the book, the country of Zhao-wa 爪哇 (i.e. Java), formerly called She-po 婆,

> has four large towns, none of which is a walled city and suburban area. The ships which come from other countries first arrive at

> a town named Du-ban 杜板, next at a town named Xin-cun 新村 (New Village), then at a town named Su-lu-ma-yi 苏鲁马益, then again at a town named Man-zhe-bo-yi 满者伯夷, where the king of the country lives.[2]

In the same text, Ma Huan noted that Du-ban 杜板 was called Du-ban 赌斑 locally, New Village was called Ge-er-xi 革儿昔 (Gresik), and Su-lu-ma-yi was called Su-er-ba-ya 苏儿把牙 (Surabaya) locally. Between Su-er-ba-ya and Man-zhe-bo-yi, there was a small town called Zhang-gu 章姑 (Cangkir).[3] There were no other place names in Java mentioned in the text.

According to *Xingcha Shenglan Jiaozhu* 星槎胜览校注 annotated by Feng Chengjun, the country of Zhao-wa (Java) was formerly called She-po, "if one sails from Zhan Cheng 占城 (Champa) following the wind direction, it takes 20 nights and days to reach there."[4]

According to *Ming Shi,* Zhao-wa is located at the southwest side of Zhan Cheng (Champa). During the Yuan dynasty, "the first emperor sent his envoy Mengqi 孟琪 [to Java], but his face was mutilated. The Yuan emperor got furious, he sent troops to punish [the Java king] and the troops returned to China after defeating the country."[5]

It goes on to say:

> During the third year of Yong Le reign, the Ming emperor sent Zheng He to Zhao-wa. The following year, the Western King of Java (Xiwang) and the Eastern King of Java (Dongwang) were at war; the Eastern King was defeated and his kingdom was annexed. Meanwhile, the Ming envoys happened to pass the territory of the Eastern King; when Ming soldiers entered the city, 170 were killed by the Western King men. Fearing [punishment], the Western King sent envoys to China to seek pardon. The Ming Emperor deplored the envoys, and ordered them to submit 60

> thousand taels of gold as compensation. During the sixth year of the Yong Le reign, Zheng He was dispatched to Zhao-wa; the Western King sent envoys to offer 10 thousand taels of gold. The Ming officer complained that the amount was insufficient, and jailed the envoys. The Emperor said, "I sent the envoy overseas. The purpose was to make them acknowledge their crime. I do not intend to take their gold." The Emperor then gave away the gold.[6]

There is no doubt that the Chinese records are informative. Nevertheless, they only mentioned that Zheng He landed in the "country" called Java and visited Surabaya, Gresik, Tuban, and Majapahit. (Note that Majapahit in *Yingya Shenglan* was recorded as the name of a place rather than an empire.) Although the source also noted that during one of the visits to Java, the country was divided into West and East and there was a war between Western and Eastern king, nevertheless, no other place-name was mentioned. Based on this record, most historians noted that Zheng He neither visited Semarang nor San-bao-long 三宝垄, the name of Semarang as called by the local Chinese. In other words, although Zheng He visited Java six times,[7] there was no written record in the Chinese sources about Semarang.

Nevertheless, many people in Indonesia believe that Zheng He landed at Semarang where there is a huge temple called Klenteng Sam Po Kong (or San Bao Gong temple 三宝公庙 or 三保公庙), also known as Gedung Batu (Stone House), believed to be a commemorative place where Zheng He had landed.

DID ZHENG HE VISIT SEMARANG?

Did Zheng He ever visit Semarang, the third largest port in Java after Jakarta and Surabaya? What evidence do we have that Zheng He indeed had landed at Semarang? Below are some of the theories/

views to support the view that Zheng He had indeed landed in Semarang (or in the proximity of Semarang):

1. **Zheng He arrived near Semarang during the first expedition**. This theory was first advanced by Li Changfu 李长傅, a pre-war Chinese historian on the overseas Chinese. Li Changfu noted that "the first expedition which began at the third year of Yong Le reign (June 1405) … departed from Shuzhou, stopped at Fujian, moved down south to Zhan Cheng 占城 (Champa), and further south to Java, *probably* [emphasis, mine] landed at the proximity of Semarang. During that period, there was civil war in Java, 170 soldiers under Zheng He were killed. Zheng He launched an attack, the King Virabhumi feared, sent envoys to China to ask for pardon."[8] Li Changfu further noted that "There is the Zheng He Cave in Semarang, it is believed to have been the legacy of Zheng He. In front of the cave is the Zheng He Temple, where Zheng He's portrait was worshipped; joss sticks were being burnt all the time. Both Chinese and the indigenous population are believers."[9]

Li Changfu did not provide strong evidence that Zheng He landed at Semarang. His argument was based on the existence of the Zheng He temple and Zheng He cave which were believed to have been built after the Zheng He expeditions. It is uncertain when Semarang was established. Many noted that the city was established after the Zheng He expeditions. Li Changfu was cautious in not stating categorically that Zheng He had landed at Semarang, but "probably landed in the proximity of Semarang".

2. **Zheng He landed at Semarang in 1416 [during the fifth voyage].** This view was proposed by Liem Thian Joe 林天佑 a pre-World War II local Chinese historian. Liem noted

that there were at least two versions with regard to Zheng He's journey to Semarang.[10] The first version: "The Chinese first came to Semarang around 1416. According to the Chinese records [he did not say what records], the Chinese first arrived in Bantam (Banten), and spread to a few places, for instance, Japara, Lasem, Rembang, Demak, Tanjung, Buyaran, and eventually reached Semarang. The first man who came to Semarang was Sam Poo Tay Djin (i.e., San Bao Da Ren 三保大人 not Zheng He). He had an unforgettable legacy, that is, the Stone House (Gedung Batu), which is also known as Sam Po Cave (Sam Po Tung or San Bao Dong 三保洞)."[11] The second version: "according to the Gong Guan [also spelled as Kong Koan, local Chinese office] archive in Semarang, it said that San Po Tay Djin and The Ho [Hokkien pronunciation of Zheng He] were two persons. During the reign of emperor Xuan De (宣德), there was a eunuch called San Po (San Bao), which is now known as Sam Po Kong (San Bao Gong); he was asked to search for treasure, and was joined by Zheng He and others to sail to the north.[12] Originally they arrived in Jambi, then Bantam and eventually arrived in Semarang. In the Sam Po Cave, there is a grave. According to the old tale, it was the grave of Sam Po Kong's navigator."[13]

The first version of Liem Thian Joe's argument was based on popular history that the Chinese came to Java through Bantam and Batavia (the name of Jakarta during the Dutch period). However, the traditional records of Zheng He's voyages started in East rather than West Java. The second version, which was based on the Semarang Kong Koan's 公馆 archives, is supposed to be more reliable but the archives are no longer available. Nevertheless, the argument that Sam Po and Zheng He were two persons are erroneous, so was the translation of Zhan Cheng (Champa in

Vietnam) as Jambi (a town in Sumatra called Zhan Bi 占碑). Liem stated that Zheng He visited Semarang during the Xuan De Emperor reign, which was around 1430, yet he noted that Zheng He came to Semarang in 1416. If it was 1416, it should be during the reign of Yong Le, which was during his fifth expedition. If Zheng He arrived at Semarang during the reign of the Xuan De emperor, it means that he visited Semarang during the seventh expedition. Liem provided two dates of Zheng He's arrival in Semarang but it is not clear whether it was in 1416 or 1430, or perhaps both?

3. **Zheng He stopped over in Semarang in 1413.** This story was mentioned in a controversial book written by a local Batak historian Parlindungan. Parlindungan claimed to have the documents from a Dutch Resident Poortman, who was instructed by the Dutch colonial government to investigate the Chinese Muslim community soon after the Indonesian communist rebellions in the mid-1920s. Poortman was said to have succeeded in confiscating three loads of documents from the Sam Po temples and later in Talang near Cirebon. These documents had been stored for between 400 and 500 years. One of the documents reveals the history of Chinese Muslims in Java since the arrival of Zheng He from 1368 to 1585. Parlindungan obtained a copy of Poortman's document and included it in his book entitled *Tuanku Rao: Teror Agama Islam di Tanah Batak Mazhab Hambali 1816–1833* (published in 1964). In the book, there is a paragraph which reads: "1413, the fleet of Ming emperor of China put in for a month at Semarang for ship repairs. Admiral Haji San Po Bo [San Bao], Haji Mah Hwang [Ma Huan] and Haji Feh Tsin [Fei Xin 信] came in very often to the Hanafite Chinese mosque in Semarang for divine service."[14]

The documents included in Parlindungan's book on the Chinese Muslims in Java were written in Chinese Malay. The original document was in Chinese and someone would have translated it into Malay. But the one included in Parlindungan's book was obvious that the material was rephrased as the wordings and terms had the characteristics of the language of 1960s, and the original copy is not available. The information coincided with the Zheng He voyages, but Zheng He was mentioned as San Po Bo not Sam Po, while Zheng He's followers Ma Huan and Fei Xin were also transcribed in Chinese dialect. Many questioned the authenticity of the document, but some Indonesian historians had different views. They took the story quite seriously. Because of its "subversive views", the book, together with a book by Professor Slamet Muljana, which is also based on the same source,[15] were banned during the New Order. After the fall of Suharto, the theory has begun to receive more attention. We will return to this book again when discussing the Islamization of Java after the arrival of Zheng He.

4. **Zheng He was possibly buried in Semarang**. This view was put forward by a leading Chinese expert on Zheng He, Professor Zheng Yijun 郑一钧. The date of Zheng He's demise has been controversial as it was not clearly recorded in the Chinese chronicles. Zheng Yijun at one time was of the opinion that Zheng He died in 1435, but in 1963 after conducting more research, he published an article stating that Zheng He died in early April of 1433 at Calicut, in southwest India, where one could find a grave where Zheng He's cloths were buried.[16] Nevertheless, his remains were not buried there. According to Prof. Zheng Yijun, "Zheng He died at Guli 古里 (Calicut) on his way back. The next stop for the expedition was Sumatra and Java before returning to China. However it

was already Summer, and the fleet were in the tropical zone, Zheng He's remains could not be kept for a long time, and it was impossible to bury it in China, he was therefore buried in Semarang."[17] In a recent article published in the *Zheng He Shi Shi* (The Zheng He Epic, 2005), Zheng Yijun repeated his view but on a more cautious note. He maintained that "After Zheng He demised in Guli [Culicut], the next stops of the fleets were Sumatra, Malacca and Java before returning to China. During that time it was entering Summer, the fleets were in the tropical zone, Zheng He's remains could not be kept for long, to bury him in China was no longer possible, therefore he was buried in Semarang [San Bao Long] of Java. However, then Semarang was not called San Bao Long. It was possible that due to the burial of Zheng He there, it was named San Bao Long to commemorate him. The meaning of 'long' in local language was 'grave'. The meaning of San Bao Long was the Grave of Zheng He [San Bao]. This was the reason for naming the place as San Bao Long … As to whether or not Zheng He was buried in Semarang, I hope ethnic Chinese scholars can provide us with more clues; it is possible that the grave of Zheng He was in Semarang".[18]

In fact, there are many alleged Zheng He graves, of which one is in Nanjing. The Nanjing mausoleum was considered to be genuine, but some said that it was only a Zheng He memorial grave where his cloths were buried. With regard to the Zheng He grave in Semarang, no one is certain about its location. Zheng Yijun did not mention specifically that Zheng He had visited Semarang when alive, but since the fleet had to pass Semarang on the way back to China, one can assume that Zheng He's expeditions had been there.

It should also be noted that San Bao Long was a Chinese translation of Semarang, not its original name. According to the

story, Semarang came from "Asem Arang" which originally referred to scattered tangerine (Asem Jarang-Jarang) as in the past a lot of tangerine trees were in that area.[19] It was the Chinese community which called Semarang San Bao Long.

5. **The possibility that one of the Zheng He fleets came to Semarang**. This was suggested by Professor Kong Yuanzi 孔远志.[20] Following the general proposition, Professor Kong argued that Zheng He visited Java six times but Chinese chronicles never mentioned Semarang. Nevertheless, he quoted two other Chinese historians (Li Xueming 李学民 and Huang Kunzhang 黄昆章) that said: "Semarang was an uninhabited area. During the Song, Yuan and Ming dynasties, the number of overseas Chinese began to increase. But they centered on East Java towns such as Tuban, Gresik, Surabaya, Jepara in Central Java, and Banten in West Java and gradually moved to Semarang."[21] The Zheng He fleets, Professor Kong argued, might have encountered storms and landed near Semarang. Because the areas were not well inhabited, Chinese books such as *Yingya Shenglan* have no record of the place.[22] He also noted that it was possible that one of the Zheng He fleets, not Zheng He himself, came to Semarang, as this happened during 1430 when a few of Zheng He minor fleets arrived at Mecca (Tianfang 天方).

Professor Kong Yuanzi was cautious in making the judgment.[23] However, he was quite open with regard to Zheng He's possible visit to Semarang. He admitted if not Zheng He himself, one of his fleets might have called on Semarang or a place in the proximity of Semarang.

Despite the absence of the Chinese records to substantiate Zheng He's trips to Semarang, local Chinese strongly believed that Zheng He had landed there. They also believed that the

Zheng He temple was built after his arrival. Indeed, according to the Parlindungan's book, Resident Poortman's documents noted that the temple was established in the ninth year of Yong Le's reign or 814 H (Hijrah) (Islamic Calendar), which is equivalent to 1411.[24]

As traditional Chinese chronicle records did not mention anything about Zheng He's visit to Semarang or nearby, nor did they mention anything about the Zheng He temple(s) or mosque(s) in Indonesia, then there was nothing on Zheng He's relations with the local Chinese Muslim communities and his activities in spreading Islam in Java. However, the rise of Islamic kingdoms in Java coincided with the Zheng He expeditions, and many local history and legends noted that Chinese Muslims were active in spreading Islam. K. C. Lee in his book argued that:[25]

> What seems strange to me is that this aspect of Cheng Ho's impact on the people of South-East Asia, particularly Java, was overlooked by the chronicles of Chinese history or the Sinologist who apparently had no knowledge of Islam. Similarly, it was also left out by Islamic writers, probably because of lack of knowledge of Chinese and Sinology. It is difficult to believe that the Sampo eunuch and his Muslim interpreters did not do anything to propagate their religion on their expeditions to South-East Asia.

In fact, in Chinese chronicles, there were some records about Chinese Muslims in Java but they were mentioned in passing. It is true that the Chinese chronicles did not mention Zheng He or the activities of his interpreters in spreading Islam. Apart from the reasons mentioned by Lee, another possibility was that the mission of Zheng He to the Western Seas was to establish the tributary system or to restore the Confucian Order

in Southeast Asia and beyond, not to spread Islam. Even if Zheng He and his aides — many of them were Muslims — did spread Islam, it is not likely that it would be recorded in Chinese chronicles, as it was against the objectives of his Confucian mission.

Nevertheless, a question arises: why did Yong Le send Zheng He, a Muslim eunuch, to lead the expeditions? Was it due to the fact that the Muslims were more knowledgeable in navigation during that period? It is true that the Zheng He fleets consisted of many nationalities (races) and many were Chinese Muslims.[26] Or was Zheng He entrusted the task for his loyalty or both loyalty and skills?

While the Chinese chronicles and records did not have information on the role of Zheng He in spreading Islam in Malacca and Java, especially his role in the latter, local history (such as Parlindungan's book and *Babad Tanah Jawi*) and oral history had many stories about this. In Java, for instance, many mosques or temples with some Islamic characteristics were said to have been established by Zheng He. Zheng He and his subordinates initially Islamized the Chinese community in Java, and it was these Muslim Chinese who later played major roles in spreading Islam in Java. It was also not surprising that the Malacca king was later converted to Islam and went to China with Zheng He. The journey was recorded in Chinese records but not the conversion.

ZHENG HE AND THE MALAY ANNALS OF SEMARANG AND CERBON

The information included in Parlindungan is also known as *The Malay Annals of Semarang and Cerbon* (hereafter *MASC*),[27] as referred to by Professor H.J. de Graaf (1899–1984) and Professor Th. G. Th. Pigeaud (1899–?). These two Dutch scholars initially dismissed

MASC as pure fabrication. However, they later changed their views and re-examined the documents. Both began to compile their research findings and the manuscript was later edited by Professor M. C. Ricklefs, an expert on Islamic history in Java, and published by Monash University.[28] Although still critical, both Dutch scholars gave credit to *MASC* as many facts and data are difficult to ignore. Ricklefs himself also noted that "the text thus merits the careful study devoted to it by de Graaf and Pigeaud and the attention of other scholars. Clearly, caution is required, for as de Graaf and Pigeaud show, it would be foolish to take all parts of this text at face value."[29]

A more recent study conducted by Sumanto Al Qurtuby entitled *Arus Cina-Islam-Jawa: Bongkar Sejarah atas Penanan Tionghoa dalam Penyebaran Islam di Nusantara Abad XV & XVI* (2003) also used the book. He noted that *MASC* should not be completely rejected nor accepted. It should be read critically. And indeed, he argued, a lot of information, when used together with other Indonesian records and historical sites, explains Indonesian history and the role of the Chinese in the Islamization of Java.[30]

It should be noted that MASC covers the period from Zheng He and beyond. Let us focus on the Zheng He period with special reference to Java and beyond. Apart from the point 3 above regarding Zheng He in Semarang in 1413, there are other interesting stories which throw light on Zheng He and his role in the Islamization of Java. Below are some of the relevant paragraphs (in English translations) cited in the *Malay Annals of Semarang and Cerbon:*[31]

1368-1645: The Ming dynasty, which employed a very great number of Hanafite Muslim Chinese officials from Yunnan, reigned in China.

1407: The fleet of the Ming emperor of China seized Kukang (=Palembang) which from ancient times had been a nest of Chinese pirates, non-Muslims, from Hokkian, Cen Cu Yi, the chief of the pirates of Kukang, was taken prisoner and brought in chains to Peking. There he was publicly decapitated as a warning for the Hokkien Chinese throughout the Nanyang countries. In Kukang the first Hanafite Muslim Chinese community in the Indonesian archipelago was established. In the same year another was settled in Sambas, Kalimantan.

1411–16: Hanafite Muslim Chinese communities were also established in the Malaya Peninsula, in Java and the Philippines. In Java mosques were built in Ancol/Jakarta, Sembung/Cirebon, Lasem, Tuban, Tse Tsun/Gersik, Jiaotung/Joratan, Cangki/ Mojokerto and in other places.

1419: Admiral Haji Sam Po Bo appointed Haji Bong Tak Keng in Campa to control the flourishing Hanafite Muslim Chinese communities which were spreading Islam along the coasts of Nanyang …. Haji Bong Tak Keng appointed Haji Gan Eng Cu in Manila/Philippines to control the Hanafite Muslim Chinese communities there and in Matan/Philippines.

1423: Haji Gan Eng Cu from Manila/Philippines was transferred by Haji Bong Tak Keng to Tuban/Java to control the flourishing Hanafite Muslim Chinese communities in Java, Kukang and Sambas. At that time, Tuban was Java's main port, with the kingdom of Majapahit as its hinterland.

Haji Gan Eng Cu became a kind of consul-general of the Chinese Government, the Ming Emperor, having control of all Muslim Chinese communities in the southern Nanyang, including Java, Kukang, and Sambas. In respect of the still existing but

degenerated Majapahit kingdom Haji Gan Eng Cu became a kind of "Muslim Kapten Cina" [head of Chinese Muslim community] in Tuban. But since the Chinese fleet of the Ming Emperor dominated all navigation in the seas of the Nanyang [countries], Haji Gan Eng Cu became also de facto harbour master in Tuban. As a reward for the services he provided to the court of Majapahit from the harbour of Tuban, he was given the title A Lu Ya by Raja Su King Ta, King of Majapahit, between1427 and 1447. The supposition here is that Haji Gan Eng Cu is Aria Teja, and he was the father of Nyi Ageng who was born in Manila, the Philippines.

1424–49: His Excellency Haji Ma Hong Fu was appointed ambassador of the Ming Emperor of China at the court of Majapahit. Haji Ma Hong Fu was a son of the Warlord of Yunnan and a son-in-law of Haji Bong Tak Keng. On the way to the court of Majapahit, Haji Ma Hong Fu and his family were escorted by Feh Tsin [Fei Xin] who had visited the court of Majapahit three times as the roving ambassador. (The supposition here is that Putri Campa was the wife of Haji Ma Hong Fu.)

1425–31: Admiral Haji Sam Po Bo became Governor of Nanyang and de facto viceroy of Southern China, including the Nanyang [countries]. In the Hanafite Chinese mosque in Semarang, a special divine service was performed, followed by prayers for safety for Haji Sam Po Bo.

1430: Admiral Haji Sam Po Bo himself occupied the district of the Tu Ma Pan in East Java and presented this district to Raja Su King Ta. Gan Eng Wan, brother of Haji Gan Eng Cu, became governor of Tu Ma Pan, under the suzerainty of the Majapahit ruler. He was the first regent (Bupati) in the Majapahit kingdom who professed Islam.

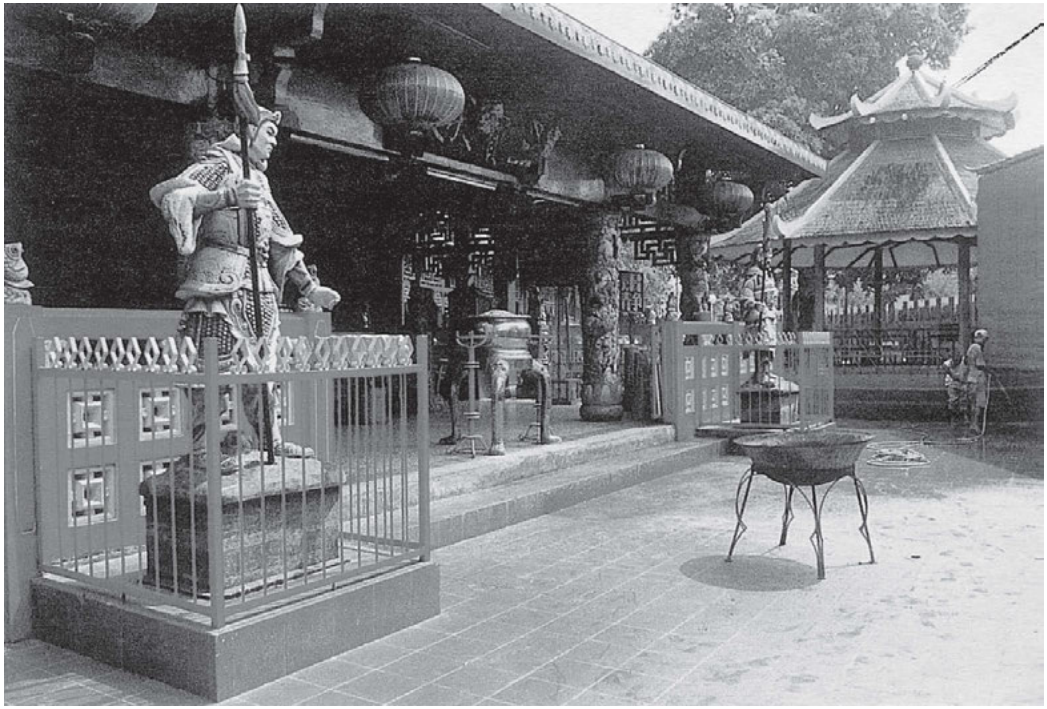
1431: Admiral Haji Sam Po Bo passed away. The Hanafite Muslim Community of Semarang performed a Divine Service (*Sembahyang Ghaib*).

The information on the Chinese Muslims and the decline of Majapahit and rise of Islamic kingdoms was more detailed after the death of Zheng He, but since the purpose of this paper is confined to the Zheng He period, they are not included. Nevertheless, from the above quotations from *Malay Annals of Semarang and Cerbon*, it is quite clear that Zheng He and Chinese Muslims were active during the first quarter of the 15th century. In the Chinese chronicles not much was mentioned about these activities.

It should be noted that Zheng He in the *Malay Annals* was called as Sam Po Bo, not Sam Po or Tjeng Ho (Cheng Ho) or The Ho. It is possible that Parlindungan or the editor (editors) of the *Annals* before him was not very sure about Chinese names or history as "Bo" does not really have any meaning. In fact, the spelling of many historical Chinese names are not transcribed properly either.

If we accept the arguments of the *Malay Annals of Semarang and Cerbon*, the spread of Islam to Indonesia in general and to Java in particular may be rewritten. In fact, Sumanto in his controversial book stated that Chinese Muslims played important roles in Java in the Islamization of the areas and should be acknowledged. He also noted that Islamization in Java was not confined to the contribution of nine saints (wali songo), but other Muslim leaders also made important contribution. He argued that Demak and Ceribon played important roles in the early spread of Islam. Raden Patah of Demak was a Chinese Muslim, and Sunan Gunung Jati of Cirebon had Chinese wife and his culture was a mixture of Hindu, Islam and Chinese.

FIGURE 5.1
Sam Po Temple, Semarang



Source: The Zheng He Epic, p. 238.

FIGURE 5.2
The Statue of Zheng He in the Tay Kak Sie (Da Jue Shi) Temple, Semarang

Source: The Zheng He Epic, p. 241.

FIGURE 5.3
Zheng He Mosque, Surabaya

Source: The Zheng He Epic, p. 245.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This short paper has highlighted the difficulties of doing research on Zheng He in Southeast Asia in general and in Java in particular. It appears that there are insufficient sources to study Zheng He in Southeast Asia in general and in Indonesia in particular. Information obtained only from Chinese written sources, especially those Chinese chronicle records which are frequently cited, is inadequate as many things were not reported there. On the other hand, local records and historical sites often give interesting clues to the historical events. But the reliability of these sources should be scrutinized to determine which is really "true history", and which may be merely "legend". Nevertheless, it is also important to note that many "oral histories" are more legend (fiction) than history (fact) — yet they are part of the collective memories of the people in the areas concerned, and they cannot be ignored. Herein lies the difficulty of studying Zheng He as a historical figure and his contribution to the history of Southeast Asia.

Because of the complexity of the problem, the legendary Zheng He in fact is equally exciting as the historical fact. If the study of Zheng He excluded the "legendary" part, I am afraid the study of Zheng He would not be complete, because Chinese written records are far from complete. Also, it is not only history but also legend that has made Zheng He memorable.

Notes

1. On the quality of these records regarding Zheng He's expeditions, the views of scholars have not been united. For their views on these books and other major sources, see Xiang Da, "Guanyu sanbao taijian xiaxiyang de jizong ziliao" (On materials regarding Zheng He's expeditions to western ocean), *Yu gong half-monthly*, vol. 2, no. 6 (December 1934); republished in Wang Tianyou and Wan

Ming, eds. *Zheng He Yanjiu Bainian lunwen xuan* (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2004), pp. 9–31.

2. *Ma Huan: Ying-yai Sheng-lan, The Overall Survey of Ocean's Sources*, translated by J.V.G. Mills (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 86; also Ma Huan, *Yingya shenglan*, (Beijing: Zhunghua shuju, 1955). p. 7. Please note that I have used Pinyun in my transliteration.
3. Ma Huan, *Yingya Shenglan*, pp. 8–9.
4. Feng Chenjun, *Xingcha Shenglan Jiaozhu*, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1954), p.13.
5. *Ming Shi*, (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1974), vol. 28, (on Java) p. 8402.
6. *Ming Shi*, (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1974), vol. 28, (on Java) p. 8403.
7. According to J.V.G. Mills, who translated *Ying-yai sheng-lan* from the Chinese text edited by Feng Ch'eng-chun 冯承钧 with introduction, notes and appendices, Zheng He visited Java six times; the only expedition that he did not visit Java was during the 6th expedition.
8. Li Changfu, *Zhongguo Zheming Shi* 中国殖民史, 1936, reprinted in Taiwan by Shangwu Shuju, 1980, pp. 110–112.
9. Li Changfu, ibid.
10. Liem Thian Joe, *Riwajat Semarang (Dari Djamannja Sam Poo Sampai Terhapoesnja Kongkoan)* (Semarang & Batavia: Boekhandel Ho Kim Yoe, c 1933).
11. Ibid., p. 1.
12. Shoubld be to the "south" rather than to the "north".
13. Liem Thian Joe, p. 1.
14. M. O. Parlindungan, *Tuanku Rao: Teror Agama Islam Mazhab Hambali di Tanah Batak, 1816-1833*, Penerbit Tandjung Pengharapan, p. 653; also H.J. De Graaf and Th.G. Th. Pigeaud, *Chinese Muslims in Java in the 15th and 16th Centuries*, edited by M.C. Ricklefs, Monash Papers on Southeast Asia No. 12, (Clayton: Victoria, 1984), p. 14.
15. Slamet Muljana, *Runtuhnja Keradjaan Hindu-Djawa dan Bangkitnja Keradjaan-keradjaan Islam di Nusantara* (Djakarta: Bharatara, 1968).
16. Zheng Yijun, "Zheng He died in 1433", *Guangming Ribao* 光明日报 16 March 1963. Cited in *San Baolong Lishi* 三宝垄历史 (Chinese

translation of *Riwajat Semarang* by Liem Thian Joe, translated into Chinese by Li Xuemin and Chen Xuanhua) (Canton: Jinan University Overseas Chinese Institute, 1984), p. 317.

17. Ibid.
18. *Zheng He Shi Shi* 郑和史诗 (Kunming: Chenguang Chubanshe, 2005), p. 280.
19. Liem Thian Joe, p. 2.
20. Kong Yuanzi, *Zhongguo Yindunixiya wenhua jiaoliu* 中国印度尼西亚文化交流 (Beijing: Peking University Press, 1999), p. 70.
21. Li Xuemin and Huang kunzhang, *Yinni huaqiao shi* 印尼华侨史 (Canton: Guangdong Jiaoyu chubanshe, 1987), p. 74, cited in Kong Yuanzi, *Zhongguo Yindunixiya wenhua jiaoliu*, p. 71.
22. Kong Yuanzi, p. 70.
23. Kong Yuanzi wrote a book on Zheng He in Indonesian, see Kong Yuanzi, *San Po Gong dan Indonesia*, 1992. He also briefly discussed several arguments regarding Zheng He's visit to Semarang, pp. 42–43.
24. Parlindungan, p. 664.
25. Lee Khoon Choy, *Indonesia Between Myth and Reality* (Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Hong Kong: Federal Publications, 1977), p. 95.
26. Wang Tai Peng, "Zheng He, Wang Dayuan and Zheng Yijun: Some New Insights", *Asian Culture* 28, pp. 54–62.
27. The original title given in Parlindungan's book is: "Peranan Orang2 Tionghwa/Islam/Hanafi Di dalam Perkembangan Agama Islam di Pulau Djawa, 1411-1564," see Parlindungan, p. 650.
28. See also endnote no. 14 for details.
29. Ibid., p. vi.
30. Sumanto Al Qurtuby, *Arus Cina-Islam-Jawa: Bongkar Sejarah atas Peranan Tionghoa dalam Penyebaran Agama Islam di Nusantara Abad XV & XVI* (Jakarta: Inspeal Ahimsakarya Press, 2003), pp. 151–71.
31. The translation was largely based on the English version included in the edited book by M. C. Ricklefs (1984), but I have consulted the Indonesian original and retranslated the portion which does not fit the original.

Chapter 6

A CELEBRATION OF DIVERSITY Zheng He and the Origin of Pre-Colonial Coastal Urban Pattern in Southeast Asia

Johannes Widodo

Located right at the cross-roads of world trading routes, Southeast Asia has been very open towards various influences from the outside. All of those influences was absorbed and adopted into local culture, then expressed into our unique but yet closely linked culture, language, artifacts, architecture, and urban form.

The trading exchanges took place mostly in and around the South China Sea, Java Sea, and Melaka Strait — which could be perceived as the Mediterranean of Asia — lying between two great sub-continents (China and India), and between two great oceans (Pacific and Indian). Since 1st century the coastal regions and their hinterlands therefore became fertile grounds for the growth of new civilizations, new blends of urbanism and architecture.

Prior to the arrival o the European in early 15th century, Emperor Yongle appointed Zheng He as Admiral to lead a Ming Dynasty's armada to extend friendship and trade relations into

Reprinted from Johannes Widodo, "A Celebration of Diversity: Zheng He and the Origin of the Pre-Colonial Coastal Urban Pattern in Southeast Asia", *Journal of Southeast Asian Architecture* 6 (2002/2003): 11–22, by permission of the Department of Architecture, National University of Singapore.

the Indian Ocean — and also to bring the whole world into the sphere of Ming influence. His expeditions (1405–1433) had planted seeds of new settlements and consolidated all overseas Chinese settlements under Ming's authority.

This article is to celebrate Southeast Asian cultural diversity in both social and material levels. It will explore the heritages, links and connections of Admiral Zheng He in the coastal regions of Southeast Asia, especially in the urban culture, settlement structures and its architecture. Here history is perceived as a layering process rather than a linear succession of events. Thus in this sense, the city or settlement can be seen as a repository of cumulative memory of its inhabitants along time, a unique formation of urban culture and identity.

ZHENG HE'S VOYAGES

From around 800 until 1368 (the end of Yuan dynasty, the beginning of Ming dynasty) Chinese merchant vessels began to visit Southeast Asia and travel as far as India. Srivijaya was the main port of call for the Chinese junks. During this period, Chinese diasporic settlements developed in the existing ports or they formed new settlements in coastal regions of Southeast Asia.

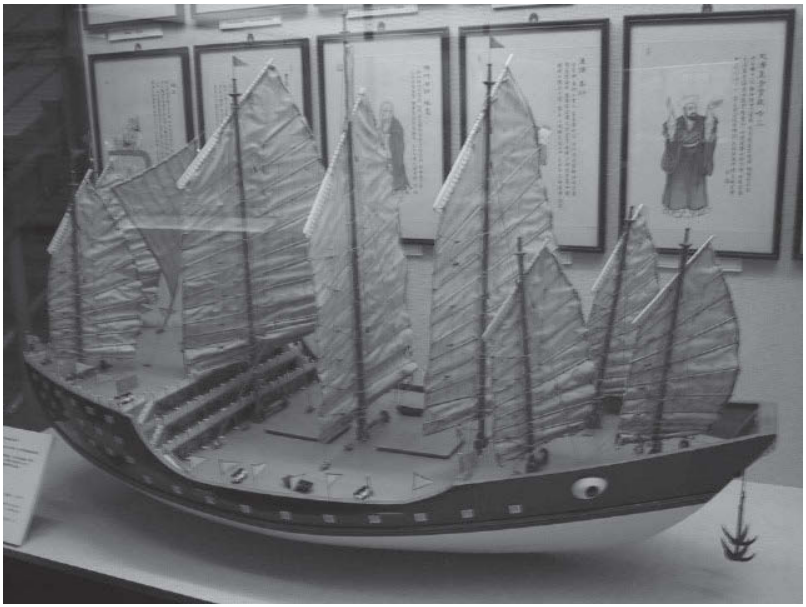
Islam entered Southeast Asia through two different routes: northern and southern. The northern route was through the ancient land route which connected Europe, Arabia, Persia, central Asia, and China — known as the "Silk Road". The southern route was from Arabia through India, then to Aceh at the tip of Sumatra through sea route — known as the "Ceramic Route". A Muslim explorer, Ibn Battuta, arrived at the city of Quanzhou in Fujian province, southern China in 14th century, and he called it Zaitun. Chinese Muslim communities lived in southern China, especially in Yunnan province. Most of them adopted "Ma" family name, which means "horse" and associated with "Muhammad".

Zheng He (or Ma He) was born as a second son of a Muslim family in Kunyang, central Yunnan in southern China. His father and his grandfather were both Haji, and their family name is Ma. Ma He's father was killed in 1381 by a Ming Dynasty military expedition; he was captured and turned into a eunuch[1] for the Nanjing palace. He became a close friend of prince Zhu Di — who later became Emperor Yongle or Ming Cheng Zu — and Ma He was promoted into the Grand Eunuch rank and received a new family name, Zheng.

Emperor Yongle appointed Zheng He as Admiral to lead a Ming Dynasty's armada to extend friendship and trade relations into the Indian Ocean. Zheng He had a personal intention to make the pilgrimage to Arabia too. Zheng He expeditions (1405–1433) planted seeds of new settlements and consolidated all overseas Chinese settlements under Ming's authority. In different places of Southeast Asia he was commonly called San Bao Gong (Sam Po Kong in Fujianese), or San Bao Da Ren (Sam Po Tay Jin in Fujianese),[2] and many temples were erected in all over coastal settlements in Southeast Asia to worship him as the founding father of their cities.

The first expedition (1405–1407) was from Nanjing to Calicut, also visiting Champa, Java, Srivijaya, other places in Sumatra, and Ceylon. The second expedition (1407–1409) was a voyage to India and to install the new king of Calicut. The third expedition (1409–1411) was to Champa, Temasek, Melaka, Sumatra (Samudera and Tamiang), and Ceylon. The fourth expedition (1413–1415) was a voyage to Champa, Java, Sumatra, Malaya, Maldives, Ceylon, India, and Hormuz. The fifth expedition (1417–1419) was to Champa, Java, Palembang, Aden, Mogadishu, Brawa, and Malindi on the west coast of Africa. The sixth expedition (1421–1422) was to Africa — and all over the world. This 6th expedition is particularly important after new research and evidences have

FIGURE 4.1
Model of Zheng He's main ship at the Maritime Museum in Macau



Source: Johannes Widodo's personal collection.

pointed out a strong possibility that Zheng He armadas were successfully mapping the whole globe and leaving a lot of traces all over the world.[3] Finally the seventh expedition (1431–1433) was to southern Vietnam, Surabaya, Palembang, Melaka, Samudera, Ceylon, Calicut, Africa, and Jeddah.

Zheng He himself had never made a visit to Mecca. He died on board at 62 and was buried in the Indian Ocean according to Muslim custom. In July 1433 the fleet arrived in China. A tomb in Niu Shou Shan hill close to Nanjing was built to honor him, and is believed to contain some of his relics. His death was also the end of the great maritime of China.

After the death of Emperor Zhu Zhanji (the grandson of Emperor Zhu Di) in 1435, the imperial palace was effectively controlled by the Confucian mandarins — the political enemy of the eunuchs. China turned itself into a complete isolation. All voyages were banned, all ships and records were destroyed, also all overseas trade and travels were prohibited.[4] After the end of the Zheng He's voyages and the gradual decline of tributary trade with China, some sailors and officers of Zheng He's fleet left China secretly with their families and settled down throughout Southeast Asia to find a better life for them. By the end of the 16th century there were tens of thousands of Chinese settled in such places as Luzon in the Philippines. Most of the Chinese colonies in Southeast Asia in the 16th century consisted of illegal traders or pirates, who tried to make profits from the failing tributary system during the end of Ming dynasty period.

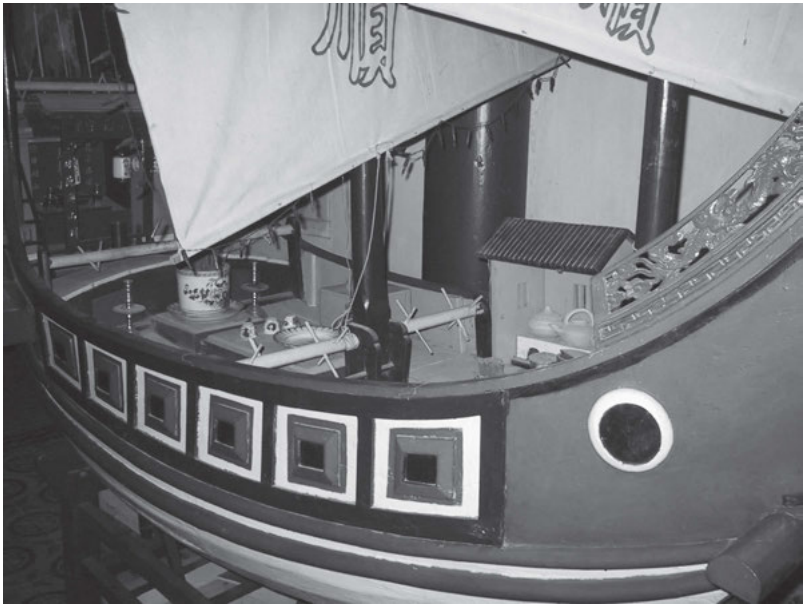
MAZU AND THE PRIMARY COASTAL URBAN PATTERN

A maiden named Lin Moniang (A.D. 960–987) is said to have lived in a small fishing village of Meizhou island, near Putian and Quanzhou, Fijian province, southern China. Many myths surround her birth, life, and after life. Her most famous miracle is saving her father and brothers from their wrecked ships during a storm. Later she was worshipped as the water deity, protector of sailors and fishermen, guardian against bandits and natural disasters. She is popularly known as "Mazu" ("grand mother").

Mazu worship first became popular during the Song dynasty (A.D. 960–1279), and since then temples dedicated to her with erected in southern China port cities (Dandong, Yantai, Qinhuangdao, Tianjin, Shanghai, Ningpo, Hangzhou, Fuzhou, Xiamen, Guangzhou, Macao, etc.).[5] It had then become a habit to

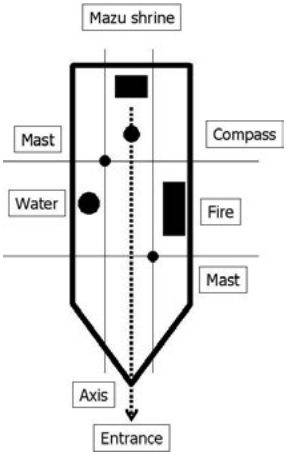
perform an extensive ritual before a sea journey. In every southern Chinese ship, there is usually a special shrine for Mazu, guarding the steering wheel, the sails, and all passengers aboard. Even Zheng He, a Muslim, also dutifully followed this local custom. In 1409, before his third voyage, he paid a tribute at the main Mazu temple in Meizhou Island. Because of her protection over Zheng He's seven voyages, the Ming Emperor bestowed the title "Tien Hou" or the "Empress of Heaven" on Mazu. Mazu worship spread out of China together with the Zheng He visits and with flows of immigrants (especially Fujianese, Teochew, Cantonese, and Hainanese) to Southeast Asia in 15th century. Her temple

FIGURE 4.2
Model of a Southern Chinese immigrant's boat with Mazu shrine in Fujianese Association Hall, Hoi An, Vietnam.



Source: JW.

FIGURE 4.3
Diagram of Chinese diaspora's boat.



Source: JW.

became the first and oldest primary element in many port cities in this region at the harbour front.

In every southern Chinese immigrant's ship, there is usually a special shrine for Mazu, guarding the compass or the steering wheel, the sails, and all passengers aboard. Once the ship reached a good place and they decided to settle down, the ship would be dismantled, but the memory embedded in the spatial-cosmological concept remained.

The nucleus of the new settlement was reconstructed based on the similar conceptual-spatial pattern such as the ship, where the Mazu temple would be located at the end of the main settlement axis facing the harbor and the two masts were placed in front of the temple. The temple housed the statue of Mazu, which once protecting the Chinese immigrant's ship during their dangerous voyage to the southern seas. The settlement's spatial structure

formation was like an imaginary ship. A small community of Chinese fishermen and traders was then formed around this nucleus — living together side by side with the indigenous population and other foreigner communities in a truly harmonious cosmopolitan urban culture.

FIGURE 4.4

Mazu temple and its double masts in 10 Ulu area, Palembang, South Sumatera, Indonesia. Pork is prohibited within the temple compound, and a grave of a Muslim boat skipper is located behind the main building. Muslim visitors perform the "wudhu" (ablution) next to the left entrance of the temple and then proceed to the tomb within the temple to offer their prayer.

Source: JW.

The Chinese settlement developed on the seaside or river mouth's side, while the native population hamlets situated deeper into the hinterland. This logical positioning is related to the logic of economic, where the Chinese settlers controlled the main economic access — and by doing this they manage to control the economic of the city. Next to the Chinese settlement usually we can find Muslim settlement with a mosque at its centre. This cohabitation and coexistence between the Chinese and the Muslim communities were common elements in Southeast Asian coastal regions.

Some good examples of this urban nucleus can still be found in Pattani, Melaka, Palembang, Tangerang, and Tuban. The existence of Mazu temples across Southeast Asia therefore forms a "sisterhoods" of port cities with a typical pattern from southern China to Japan, Taiwan, Indochina, Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia.

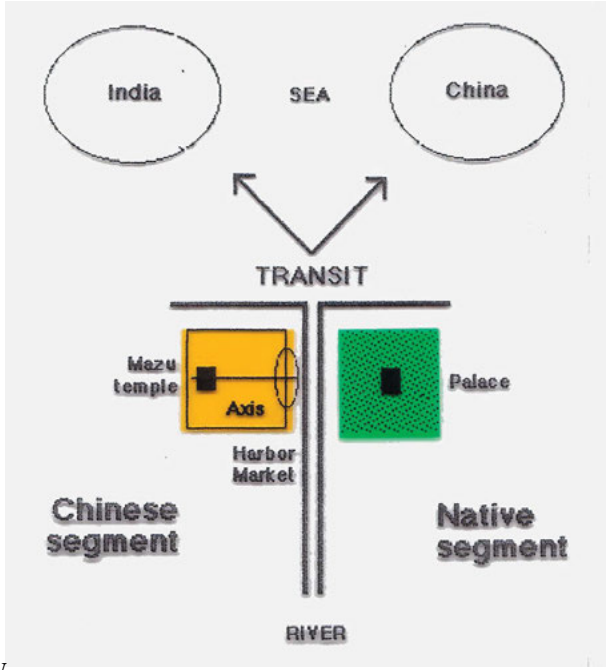
In many old Mazu temples across Southeast Asia, pork offering is prohibited, because of the spirit of tolerance planted by Zheng He in his ships. As many of the sailors in his ships were Muslims, then non-Halal foods were not served. Although idol worship is prohibited in Islam, but Zheng He respected the tradition belong to some of his sailors. In many cases within the Chinese temple compound we can find Muslim tomb where a figure related to Zheng He (navigator, translator, cook, or sailor) was believed to be buried there. These temples were became centre for pilgrimage and the source of local legends by both Chinese and non-Chinese, Muslim and non-Muslim.

When the Chinese community has become stronger and larger another temples dedicated to different deities and for various functions were appearing. To guard the settlement soil, a temple for the god of land was erected. To protect the prosperity and expansion of market and business, temple dedicated to the god of

war was constructed. Then the family or clan temples appeared, followed by the erection of the community temple. Temples and mosques were located side by side as a tangible sign of peaceful coexistence and tolerance.

The Chinese architectural elements blended with the local-vernacular design patterns and features, created numerous variations of fusion building styles. One good example of this blend is the typical trader's house in Palembang. The house plan and some of its construction method and details are of the Southern Chinese courtyard house origin, but the saddle roofs, open verandas, timber material, and its raised floor are definitely

FIGURE 4.5
***Urban model of Southeast Asian entrepot.*[6]**



Source: JW.

FIGURE 4.5
A Chinese trader's house in Palembang.

Source: JW.

local. From different cases in the same place, strong elements of Arab, Indian, and even European origins are blended into the Chinese and local-vernacular fusion typology.

THE TRACES OF ZHENG HE'S FOOTSTEPS AND ARTIFACTS

There are many artifacts and place names across Southeast Asia which keeps the memory of Zheng He's visits to this day. Places related to and temples dedicated to Zheng He are scattered all over Southeast Asia. Besides great port cities like Melaka, Semarang, or Palembang, we can find temples in Sei Raya (Western Kalimantan),

Kuala Trengganu (Kampung Jeram, Sungai Nerus), Penang (Bandar Batu Maung), Kuching (Stapok, Serawak), Zulu (Southern Philippines), Brunei (stone inscription outside Brunei palace), Sampo harbor (estuary of Menam River, Gulf of Thailand), and in many other places.

Banda Aceh — Northern Sumatra

A Chinese bell "Cakra Donya" ("The Wheel of the World") can be found in Banda Aceh.[7] According to popular belief, Ming Emperor gave it to the Sultan of Aceh through Zheng He in early 15th century. Veltman, a Dutch scholar suggested that the bell was made in 1409 based on the blurred Arabic text on the right side of the bell. However the newer Chinese text on the other side stated the year 1469. The bell was actually taken by the victorious Aceh's Sultan Mughayah Syah from the defeated Samudra Pasai in 1524. Zheng He armada visited Samudra Pasai regularly.

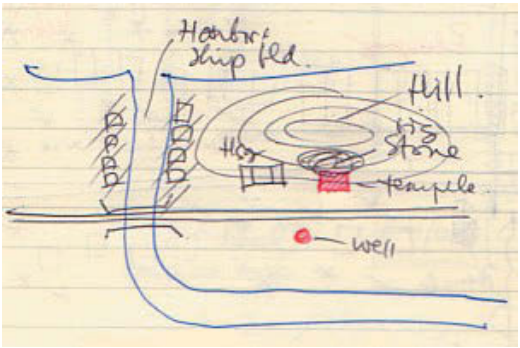
Sempalung (Sei Raya) — Western Kalimantan

A small temple dedicated to Zheng He with fresh water well nearby called Sempalung can be found in a small village next to a river Sei Raya near Singkawang in West Kalimantan. On the hilltop behind the temple — according to the popular belief — there is a stone bearing the footprints of the Admiral, and Zheng He used to draw fresh water supply from the well.

Ancol Jakarta — Western Java

In Ancol (near the coast between Jakarta and Tanjung Priok harbor) there is an old temple called "Anxu Dabogong Miao" (Dabogong temple of Ancol).[8] A stone inscription from 1923 said: "It was founded at the end of the Ming dynasty". The temple

FIGURE 4.7
Sempalung temple in Sei Raya village – West Kalimantan.



Source: Field study sketch by JW.

FIGURE 4.8
Sempalung temple is in the background and the well is in the foreground.

Source: Photo by JW.

was constructed in 1650 "above the grave of the Muslim saint" (Teisseire, 1792). There are three Islamic tombs: two under the main Zheng He's altar for Sam Po Soei Soe (Zheng He follower) and his local wife (Sundanese princess), and the other one is for the father of the princess (Embah Said Dato Kembang). The temple is the place of worship for both Chinese and Muslims. Pork is prohibited within the compound.

Gresik, Tuban, Surabaya — Eastern Java

Islam entered Gresik, the main port of Majapahit kingdom in east Java, in 1410. From there they started to move westward, and established Muslim strongholds or missionary centers along the northern coast line of Java. On his visit to Java, Admiral Zheng He found large colonies of wealthy Chinese merchants, who had arrived there at the end of the 14th century. Gresik was governed by a man from Guangdong province, and a thousand Chinese families lived there. Surabaya, another trading port nearby, also had a thousand Chinese inhabitants. Ma Huan in 1433 wrote that Chinese had already settled down in Surabaya when they visited them. Surabaya was established on the left bank of Brantas River, the main access to the inland capital city of Majapahit. The trade and other commercial activities of the country were carried out by the Chinese from the trading ports of Tuban, Gresik, and Surabaya[9] through the water ways and land routes to the capital.

In 17th century, a temple dedicated to Zheng He (Sanbao Miao)[10] was built in Morokrembangan near the coast line. The temple has been relocated to Jalan Demak 43 because the place was turned into a naval base. Inside the temple, three local deities are also worshipped: Raden Panji, Raden Ayu Pandan Sari, Mbah Sayid Sekh Maulana Maghribie, beside the ancient piece of wood ("kayu aji") and an anchor from Zheng He's junk.

The decline process of the Hanafite Chinese communities in Java around 1450–1475 was caused by the decline of power of the Ming dynasty, since the maritime linkage between the mainland and southern islands had been disconnected. A great number of mosques were changed into temples, and the fusion process towards Javanese culture (in language and inter-marriage) had been started.

Another reason for the declination of trade and Chinese colonization in east Java was the fall of Majapahit in 1520. Moreover, because of coastal piracy the Chinese colony of Tuban became permanently insignificant. Gresik became inaccessible by the sea because of the sedimentation process of its coast, and thus the Chinese settlement here also declined. Surabaya colony was remained unimportant until the early nineteenth century. There are no physical remains of these towns and its Chinese settlements in the present. The fall of Majapahit kingdom was followed by the shift of the political center from east Java to central Java. The Majapahit culture (Hindu-Java) gradually transformed into Muslim culture by Demak, the emerging Muslim kingdom in the northern coastal region of central Java.

Semarang – Central Java

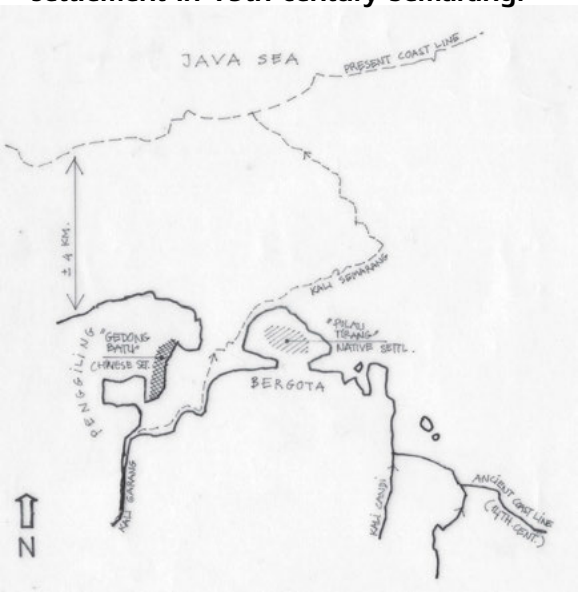
Semarang[11] in central Java was also believed to have been established by one of Zheng He's commanders, Wang Jinghong. He died at the age of 78, and was buried there according to Islamic rites. A shrine to worship Zheng He was erected inside the cave where Wang Jinghong and his men lived.[12] However, this original temple was destroyed in 1704 when the cave collapsed. The temple was reconstructed several times. Within the temple compound there is an Islamic tomb of Wang Jinghong, Zheng He's master pilot (Kiai Juru Mudi, Dampu Awang, Duogong). The fusion between

Islamic and Chinese elements is evident in physical and functional layers, and even ritual activities of the temple. People from various races and beliefs make pilgrimage and pray in this place.

The place was called Bergota, but after the Chinese began to settle there, it was called Sanbaolong — or Semarang. Before Zheng He left China on his fifth voyage, his fleet made a stop in Quanzhou (or Zaitun), and recruited pilots and navigators from a small Muslim hamlet, Baiqi, on a peninsula just north of the city. According to the village legend, when one of Zheng He's ships got stuck in shallow waters off Java (it could be Semarang), men from Baiqi had to pole furiously to release it.[13] After the boat was freed, one pole remained stuck in the sand to mark the spot.

FIGURE 4.9

Reconstruction map of the Chinese shipyard and native settlement in 15th century Semarang.



Source: JW.

According to local belief, Zheng He first landed in Mangkang,[14] an old village harbor westward of Semarang, where a small Chinese community had already established, before he went to Simongan on the slope of Penggiling hills, at the present location of the temple dedicated to him — Gedong Batu.

The Hanafite Chinese Muslim communities had already established in Semarang around 1411–1416.[15] It is believed that in 1413 the Ming's fleet was put in for a month at Semarang for ship repairs, and during this period Admiral Zheng He and his officers came very often to the Hanafite Chinese mosque in Semarang, which was probably built in 1411. The harbor had been acted as the main seaport for the Hindu-Mataram kingdom in the south.

Around the end of the fifteenth century, a mix populated Muslim and non-Muslim Chinese settlement was developed in Semarang, with the temple and the mosque right on its center. According to native tradition, the first native settlement in Semarang was opened by Ki Ageng Pandan Arang, an Arab Muslim preacher, in Bergota (known as Pulau Tirang area) in 1476.

In 1477 the Demak[16] forces attacked Semarang, to re-convert the renegade Chinese Muslim community. Although the settlement was destroyed, the old mosque or temple of Semarang was preserved, and the former Chinese Muslim was not massacred. Their technical skill in shipbuilding was still needed by the rising Demak's maritime power.

A major Chinese shipyard was built around 1541–1546 in Semarang. The shipyard built war ships for the Demak armada, to support the expansion of this Muslim Kingdom. In 1546 a dynastic quarrel has destroyed Demak. The whole town and the court of Demak, except the great mosque, were ruined. The Demak army, defeated by the rebels, escaped to Semarang and tried to defend themselves in the shipyard. But the rebel forces besieged them, and with the exception of the temple and the mosque, the whole

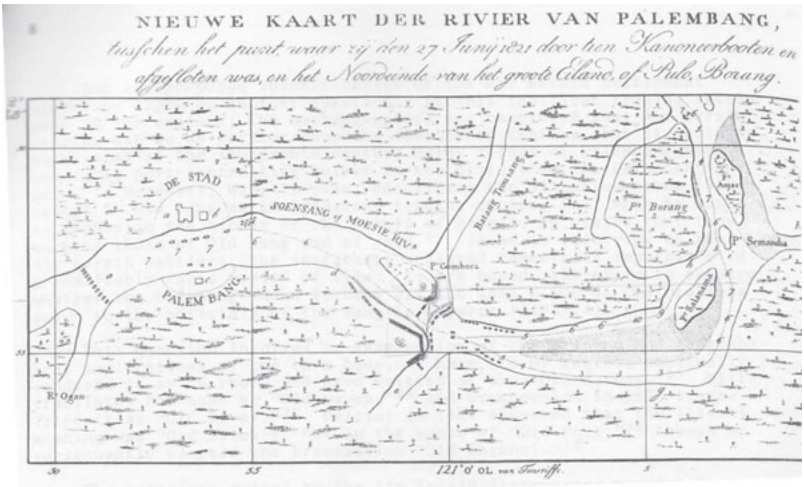
Semarang settlement including the shipyard, was set on fire. Then a loyal prince to Demak defeated the rebels, and another Muslim kingdom was established deep in the hinterland. It was the rise of Muslim Mataram kingdom in central Java. The shipyard in Semarang had never been rebuilt any more.

Palembang — Southern Sumatra

7th–11th century was the period of the great Buddhist maritime kingdom of Srivijaya ("San-fo-ch'i"). In early 13th century Chao Ju-ku mentioned about "Pa-lin-p'ing" as the dependency of "San-fo-ch'i".[17] In 1309 the Mongol sent a mission to "Pu-lien-pa". Then Ming Emperor sent a mission to "Pau-lin-pang" in 1374.

FIGURE 4.10

Map of Palembang and Musi River (1821). Pulau Kemaro ("Gombora") is one of the three islands located at the middle of the map. Mazu temple and the old Chinese settlement are located in the southern bank of the river opposite the colonial town ("De Stad") at the left part of the map.



In 1416 Ma Huan noted a place locally named "P'o-lin-pang" in Sumatra.

Zheng He's Mao-kun map (15th century) noted "3 straits at the coastland opposite Menumbing hill in Bangka coast". And Hsiang Ta & Liang-chung mentioned: "The estuary of the channel contains a settlement ('chou'). The settlement lies off the starboard side of the ship." This old channel is the present Musi River, and the "Old Kang"[18] was located at the northern side of Musi river, not far from the sea — with the distance of 3 small islands ("pulau Gombora", "pulau Salanama", "pulau Borang").

The Chinese immigrants from Guangdong, Zhangzhou, and Quanzhou came to "Old Kang" during the period of first Ming Emperor (1368–1398). It was reported that several thousands of Chinese population choose Liang Tao-ming as "Old Kang" leader at the end of 14th century to fill in the power void after Majapahit destroyed the Malay sovereignty in Palembang. Liang Tao-ming government was acknowledged by Ming emperor and protected by the Ming armada (1403-1424). In 1407 Zheng He (Cheng Ho) helped "Old Kang" in destroying the pirate gang led by Ch'en Tsu-I. Zheng He's armada visited this place on July 1432. Another record showed that three naval expeditions from Ryukyu to "Old Kang" around 1428–1439.

In the16th century a Javanese-Palembang Muslim settlement called Geding Suro at the southern bank of Musi River near Auwer creek raised, and the Chinese population from "Old Kang" moved next to them, followed by the Dutch in mid-17th century.

Although it was not directly connected to Zheng He, the story of Pulo Kemaro can be attributed to the spirit of fusion, peaceful coexistence, and tolerance promoted throughout Southeast Asia by the Admiral. Two weeks period after the Chinese lunar New Year ("Capgomeh") is the time for all ranks of people from Palembang to do a pilgrimage to a Chinese Dabogong temple in

this small island. Those who want to visit Pulo Kemaro should refrain from eating pork even though they are not Muslim, and pork is forbidden within the island.

At the centre of the temple's courtyard, there is a tomb of a Muslim lady (Siti Fatimah) who was married to a Chinese pirate — according to the local legend. Her father tomb (Syech Abdullah) is located in front of the temple. As any other Muslim burial, the body should be faced to Mecca. Therefore because of the peculiar location of the tombs within this Chinese temple, the whole layout of the temple and the site are oriented towards Qiblat.

The pilgrim will normally pay tribute to the Dabogong and other deities such as the Goddess of Mercy (Guanyin) and Mazu, whose shrines are located behind the main Dabogong altar. The next ritual is to proceed to the two Muslim tombs and finally to pray to God the Almighty in the octagonal pavilion at the other end of the axis outside the temple. The rich will acquire and then sacrifice a black goat in front of Siti Fatimah tomb, and the meat will be distributed to the poor. Finally a Buddhist priest will bless everybody by sprinkling holy water.

The activities are the manifestation of a unique mixture of Islamic, Buddhist, Taoist belief and ritual, intimately embraced by this diverse community. It gives the sense of unity and brotherhood among different racial and belief groups, bridging the rich and the poor, bringing divine mercy down to earth, and transcending differences into a common belief in God's love.

Although there is neither physical evidents nor urban patterns from Zheng He period can be found in Palembang, but the legacy of peaceful and harmonious blend of different cultures is clearly evident even until today. The Mazu temple in 10 Ulu, the Chinese trader house,[19] and the temple in Pulo Kemaro are the existing witnesses of these peaceful coexistence and the richness of communal culture developed in this cosmopolitan city.

FIGURE 4.11
The octagonal pavilion and paper burner with Persian roof style at the end of the main axis oriented towards Qiblat.

Source: JW.

Melaka — Peninsular Malaysia

The history of Melaka[20] may have been started far before the arrival of Parameswara or Iskandar Shah from Temasek in that place. Melaka has already mentioned in a Javanese poem in 1324, and it was mentioned again within a list of Siamese dependencies in 1360.

Parameswara came to Melaka, dependency of Siam around 1400.[21] He is a young prince from Palembang (Srivijaya), who rebelled against Java around 1391 or 1392. He and his followers were driven out of Sumatra and fled to Temasek, which he hoped to make a new Malay capital. But he killed a Siamese vassal there, and was expelled. Finally around 1400 he settled in a small fishing

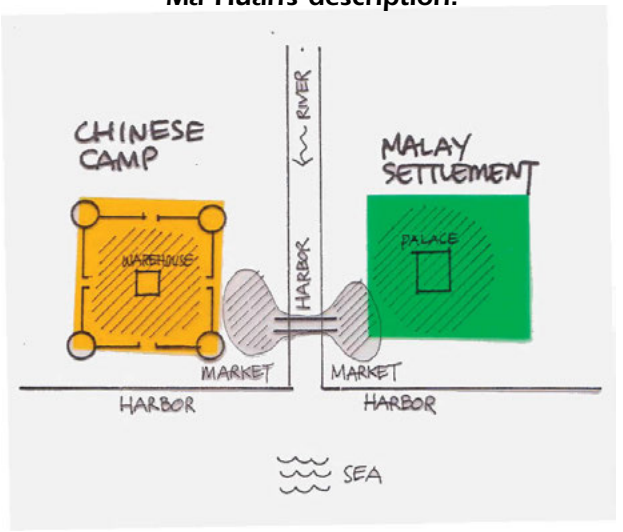
village that had a good harbor free of mangroves and a hill that could be easily defended, up the west coast of Malay Peninsula. The place was called Melaka, which is according to the Malay local legend; it was from the name of a tree, under which Parameswara stood.

The population of the town was around 2000 in 1403. A settlement chief compound was built on the hill near the harbor at the mouth of Melaka river, while "rumah panggung" (stilt houses) clustered at the base of the hill. On the other side of Melaka River, another settlement was developed. According to a traveler account, during that period there was neither king nor kingdom in Melaka.

In 1405 Parameswara's sent his first envoy to the Ming court, and then Parameswara was appointed as a king by Ming emperor, but the seal was seized by the Siamese. In 1407 Parameswara send second mission bringing tribute and presents for Ming emperor. Zheng He visited Melaka on his 3rd expedition in 1409. An armada of 48 ships reached Melaka after 20 days voyage, and presented Parameswara with official tablet to raise the status of Melaka and its environs as a kingdom.

In 1414 Melaka officially accepted Islam as a formal religion. In 1417 Zheng He visited Melaka on his 5th expedition, and again in 1431 he visited the city on his 7th (last) expedition. In 1436 Fei Hsin (a scholar in Zheng He's ship) wrote in "Hsing ch'a sheng lan": "The people of Melaka are rather dark in skin but those who are fairer in complexion are the descendents of the Chinese". Hwang Chung (a Chinese traveler) wrote in "Hai yu" about Melaka before the arrival of the Portuguese in 1537: "Pork was eaten by the Chinese who live in Melaka. They live in an hotel, the chief of which always sends female slaves to serve them and sends their food and drink morning and evening".[22]

FIGURE 4.12
Urban model of Zheng He's Melaka based on Ma Huan's description.



Source: JW.

In Zheng He time, Ma Huan wrote that Melaka politically unimportant, but it was rapidly increasing as an entrepot of international trade between Venice and Maluku. Zheng He built a wooden palisade like a castle, with four gates and watchtowers near the harbor. Inside the palisade another palisade was also built, like a small castle, in which warehouses are located to keep money, foods and victuals. The entrepot was to keep goods from across Indian Ocean and South seas before bought to China. The fortified town was maintained as a permanent Chinese colony, and the Chinese inhabitants took Malay wives and raised their families in Melaka.

The ships which had gone to various countries returned to Melaka and assembled; they marshaled the foreign goods and

loaded them in the ships; then waited till the south wind was perfectly favorable. In the middle decade of the fifth moon they put to sea and returned home. The king of Melaka made a selection of local products, conducted his wife and son, brought his chiefs, boarded a ship and followed Zheng He's treasure-ships, and he attended at court and presented tribute to Ming emperor.

The Chinese introduced the first permanent buildings in Melaka.[23] Zheng He brought roof tiles from China to Melaka in 1409 for the royal palace's roof, and the tiles were used after 1424. Zheng He built a wooden palisade like a castle, with four gates and watchtowers in Melaka, near the harbor.[24] During the night guards kept watch around bearing bells. Inside the palisade, another palisade was also built, like a small castle, in which warehouse are located to keep moneys, foods, and victuals. This entrepot was to keep goods from throughout Indian Ocean and South seas, before brought to China. It is possible that this fort was maintained as a permanent Chinese colony, and the Chinese inhabitants took Malay wives and raised their families in Melaka.

According to local Malay legend Sultan Mansur Shah of Melaka married "princess" Hang Liu around 1446-1459,[25] but this event has never been mentioned in any Chinese chronicles. However a Portuguese traveler, Braz de Albuquerque (1500–1580) reported that in the Melaka Sultanate (ca 1415–1511), four Xabandars (Syahbandar or Port Master) were appointed to help the administration of justice in the case of foreigners[26] and one of them was a Chinese. He said that the second Sultan of Melaka, Sri Maharaja (1424-1511), married a daughter of the Captain of the King of China.

Before the Portuguese conquest in 1511, Melaka was largely populated with Javanese slaves or dependants of Javanese merchants. These Javanese were the leading craftsmen of this emporium.[27] There were also the Kling traders (Hindus from

southern India), numbered about 1,000 people when the Portuguese arrived. They lived in the Kling quarters, which stretched along the suburb of Upe (now Tengkera) situated on the right bank of Melaka river, and along the seaside. They monopolized the trade with Maluku and Banda for the most important commodities such as: cloves, mace, and nutmeg, and also active as bankers, brokers, and money lenders.

Melaka was the last great pre-colonial entrepot in Southeast Asia, before the emergence great trading ports in the region. Later the European conquered Melaka and turned it as a stepping stone towards the conquest the rest of Southeast Asia.

FIGURE 4.13
Mazu temple, Kampung Kling mosque, and Southern Indian temple located side by side in Melaka main urban axis.

Source: JW.

ZHENG HE'S LEGACY

The greatest legacy of Admiral Zheng He in Southeast Asia is the peaceful coexistence among different religions and racial groups. He promoted the spirit of tolerance, openness, and inclusiveness through trade and cultural exchanges, resulted in the harmonious fusion, communal bond, and strong sense of identity of people and cosmopolitan cities across Southeast Asia.

The Chinese who immigrated and settled in various parts of Southeast Asia were the founding fathers of many coastal cities. They laid the basic structure of urban pattern (the grid, the axis, the blocks), built many primary elements (harbor, temples, market, shopping street, community halls), and gave special identity to their adopted place. They became native to the locality where they were settling down, by adopting the cultural and architectural elements into their original heritage. New blend of architectural forms were formed, which incorporated Chinese, native, and other foreign elements into one harmonious entity.

The city became a collage of different cultures and styles, manifested in the myriad of architectural forms, rituals, and popular legends. It is a celebration of rich diversity and true identity of Southeast Asia. The unity in diversity is the character of Southeast Asian cities. Therefore any attempt to destroy the uniqueness and the character of any element will undermine the harmony and the collage of the whole community of this region.

Notes

1. Eunuchs served as the personal servants of the Emperors, and the guardian of the imperial throne at the innermost circle. There is speculation that not all eunuchs were actually castrated because of the secrecy of the palace connections and intrigues. Being a very

close personal friend of the Emperor himself, and being a Muslim who should had been circumcised during his childhood, this great statesman with thundering voice and strong masculinity who reigned and traveled outside the palace walls, is probably one of those exceptional cases.

2. "San Bao" means "the third guardian" (imperial official rank given to him by the Emperor), but could also mean "three jewels" (popular nickname referred to a small casket containing the remains of an eunuch's manhood treasures).
3. Read Menzies (2002).
4. See ibid., Chapter 2 ("A Thunderbold Strikes"), pp. 47–56.
5. When the Portuguese first landed in Aomen ("gate of the bay") in the Pearl River delta, they saw a temple of Mazu ("Ma-kok-miu") and then the place was called Ama-gao ("the bay of Amah or Mother), or Macau.
6. Entrepot (Latin "inter"+"positum", located in-between) is a center of exchange or distribution of foreign merchandise with little or without local commodities to export.
7. See Salmon and Siu (1997), Vol. 1, p. 44.
8. Ibid., Vol. I Part 1, pp. 23–35.
9. These cities had three main roles: firstly as the supply ports for intercontinental ships before their long cruises, especially for rice, secondly as concentration center of spices for international trading, and thirdly as the center of ship building and ship owners. Wherever a Muslim community was established in a coastal city, the Mosque would become the religious and social center, and thus the urban center.
10. Salmon and Siu (1997), Vol II, Part 2, pp. 713–715.
11. For a more comprehensive study on the urban history and Chinese settlement of Semarang see Widodo (1988).
12. See Salmon and Siu (1997), Vol. II, Part I, pp. 311–328.
13. See Levathes (1994), p. 148.

14. "Mangkang" was probably originated from the word "Wangkang" — the Chinese junk.
15. De Graaf, H.J., Pigeaud, G. Th. (transl.), and Ricklefs, M.C. (ed.)., "Chinese Muslims in Java in the 15th and 16th Centuries: The Malay Annals of Semarang and Cerbon", p. 14.
16. The Demak great mosque was the center of the first Muslim kingdom in Java, and was recognized as the primary center for the spread of Islam throughout Java. It was completed in 1481 with the help of non-Muslim Chinese community of Semarang, using the wooden construction method of the shipbuilding techniques — especially the famous column which is believed to be constructed by the one of the Walis.
17. See Wolters (1975).
18. A place called "Old Kang" was mentioned in Ming's record by the end of 14th century by Wang Ta-yuan. This Chinese city was situated in Air Bersih for about 4 decades in early 15th century and then gradually declined. "Kang" means harbor, haven, river, estuary, port, or channel. Wang Ta-yuan in 1330 described: "Old Kang. One enters the Bangka Strait from a fresh-water kang. The people use bamboo instead of ships. The route has many brick stupa."
19. See the previous pictures of Mazu temple and Chinese trader's house in Palembang.
20. The original name Melaka itself probably was derived to "Melakat", or "market" in Arabic.
21. See Levathes (1994), Chapter 6, pp. 107–122.
22. Sandhu (1961), p. 3.
23. Kohl (1984), pp. 70–71.
24. Ma Huan (1997), pp. 113–114.
25. See Cheah Boon Keng (1998), pp. 166–170.
26. See Sandhu (1961), p. 5.
27. See Reid (1988), Vol. 1, p. 102. Emporium ("Emporos" = market) is a market with local commodities and products to export, bigger than (or development from) Entrepot.

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Chapter 7

NOTES RELATING TO ADMIRAL CHENG HO'S EXPEDITIONS

Hsu Yun-Ts'iao

There were two extra-ordinary events in the history of early contacts between China and the Southeast Asian countries: i) the expedition of Chu Ing (朱應) and K'ang T'ai (康泰) to Southeast Asia, sent by General Lu Tai (呂岱), Governor-General of Canton and Chiaochou (now Vietnam), in the early part of the third century, and ii) the well-known expeditions of Admiral Cheng Ho (鄭和) to the "West Ocean" in the early 15th century.

The first event has long been forgotten. Chu Ing and K'ang T'ai each wrote a book on the countries they visited, but they were completely lost in the 11th century. Chu Ing's book entitled "Fu Nan Yi Wuh Chih" (扶南異物志) or "The Description of Banam Prodigies" is now untraceable, while K'ang T'ai's book, "Accounts of Foreign Countries in Wu Period" (Wu Shih Wai Kuo Chuan 吳時外國傳), was also lost, but a number of its fragmentary citations still remain in ancient Chinese literature. The present writer has painstakingly collected and published them in one volume in order to piece together the episodes in a connected series.

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The second event is quite well-known as there are many reference books dealing with the subject. Some of his followers such as Ma Huan (馬歡) wrote a book entitled "Yin Ya Shen Lan" (瀛涯勝覽), Fei Hsin (費信) wrote another book, the "Sing Cha Shen Lan" (星槎勝覽), but Kung Tseng's (鞏珍) book entitled "Hsi Yang Fan Kuo Chih" (西洋番國志) was plagiarised from Ma Huan with the exception of three rescripts of the Ming Emperor and the preface of the book. References relating to Cheng Ho and his expeditions may be found here and there in some ancient accounts of the Ming Dynasty for example from the "Ming Shih Luh" (明實錄), Hwang Hsin-Tseng's (黃省曾), Hsi Yang Ch'ao Kung Tian Luh" (西洋朝貢典錄), Tchuh Yun-Ming's "Ch'ian Wen Chi" (祝允明前聞記), Yen Ts'ung-Chian's "Shu Yueh Chou Ts Luh" (嚴從簡殊域周咨錄), Chang Hsih's "Tung Hsi Yang K'ao" (張燮東西洋考), Mao Yuan Yi's "Wu Pei Tchih" (茅元儀武備志) and so forth. So many modern scholars today have made studies on Cheng Ho and his deeds as well as on those materials mentioned above, yet there are still some doubtful problems left unsolved, which the present writer is going to discuss below:–

1. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF HIS ALIAS "SAN PAO?"

Cheng Ho was born in a Muslim family under the surname of Ma in the Yunnan Province. Cheng Ho was not therefore his original name. In his boyhood about 1381 A.D., he was captured and sent to Peking to be a slave-boy by the Ming troops. Subsequently he was castrated and sent into the palace as a small eunuch of ten years old to serve Prince Yen (燕王) who later became the Emperor Cheng Tsu (明成祖) with the title of Yung Leh (永樂1403–1424 A.D.). Until 1403 A.D., Cheng Ho was a chief eunuch and was then sent by the Emperor to the "West Ocean" as an envoy, and was also known as "San Pao T'ai Chian" (三寶太監) meaning literally

"The Three Precious Eunuchs." But since the end of the Ming Dynasty, the real meaning of San Pao is unknown. Yen Ch'ung-Chian, an official in the Missionary Bureau, mentioned in his book "Shu Yueh Chou Ts Luh", "The origin of the alias 'San Pao' is unknown, whether it was Cheng Ho's old name, or whether it was an honour given by the natives in Western Ocean to Cheng Ho, (鄭和), Wang Ching-Hung (王景弘) and Hou Hsian (侯顯) together is not clear. Lang Ying (朗瑛) of Ming Dynasty also mentioned in his book entitled, "Chih Shiu Lui Yao" (七修類藁), — "In the year of Ting Hai (丁亥) in the reign of Yung Leh (1407 A.D.), there was an imperial command to the effect that Cheng Ho, Wang Ching-Hung and Hou Hsian should go on a mission to Southeast Asian countries to bestow gifts and to proclaim the imperial rescripts: they were known as the Three Precious Eunuchs setting forth on a journey to the West Ocean." No explanation of the term San Pao was ever given. Some people presumed that San Pao was Cheng Ho's familiar name used in the palace and others thought that he might be the third son of his parents, as San Pao was a common name used to denote a third son in the family line. The former appears to be groundless, and the latter is untrue, because he was the second son of Haji Ma.

Actually, San Pao was a part of a special title given to the three eunuchs when they were appointed to form an envoy-team going abroad together, under the title of "San Pao Hsin Kuan" (三寶信官), literally translated as "The Three Trustworthy Envoys." It appeared in an incomplete old handwritten manuscript given hereunder:

> In the 19th year of the reign of Yung Leh (1421 A.D.), San Pao Hsin Kuan; Yang Min (楊敏) alias Fuh Ting (福鼎), Cheng Ho and Li K'ai (李愷) were commissioned by the Emperor to Bengal and other 36 foreign countries to perform official duties.

Some one argued that the character "Pao" given in "Cheng Ho's Account" in Ming Shih (明史) volume 304, is 保 "Pao" (protect), a simplified homonym of 寶 (treasure), so 三保 "San Pao" (three treasures) is a corruption of "San Pao" (三寶) (three protectors). In fact, "three protectors" appears meaningless, but the term "three treasures" is derived from a Sanskrit Buddhistic term "Triratna" indicating Buddha (佛), Dharma (法) and Sangha (僧). These are the most important names in Buddhism, so the Chinese take them to have an important significance. With regard the the character "Pao" (保) (protect), actually it is usually used as a simplified form of the character "Pao" (寶) (treasure) only. Based on this faulty reason, all the temples of Triratna in Southeast Asia have been regarded as being the temples of Cheng Ho. There are so many tales of Cheng Ho's connections in Southeast Asia and especially among the Chinese communities that they worship him as a god.

2. WAS HE NOT A EUNUCH (CASTRATED) CHAMBERLAIN?

Emperor T'ai Tsu (明太祖), founder of Ming Dynasty, put an Iron Plate in the palace and inscribed a rule on it to prohibit the eunuchs from getting in touch with political affairs, so it has been argued how could a eunuch like Cheng Ho become an envoy going abroad and also handle political affairs. If he could perform political work, then he should not be a eunuch. The present writer's opinion is just the contrary, because the system of appointing eunuchs as envoys had become a tradition since the reign of Wu Ti (B.C. 140–87) in the Han Dynasty (漢朝) as recorded in "Han Shu" (漢書). There was a chief interpreter under the Yellow Gate, i.e. the Eunuch Bureau, who went abroad together with other commissioned officers (enrolled men). Not only Cheng

Ho had been sent out as an envoy, but also a number of other eunuchs had been appointed as envoys in the Ming Dynasty as mentioned in "Ming Shih". Could all of them not be actual eunuchs?

Another argument has been advanced based on "Ku Chin Sheh Chian" (古今識鑑) written by Yuan Chung-Tch'eh (袁忠徹), a physiognomist in Ming Dynasty; it runs thus: "Eunuch Cheng Ho, alias San Pao, a native of Yunnan Province, had a body physique 9 feet tall and a waistline of 10 feet (originally 10 joint embraces) … walking like a tiger and speaking in a sonorous voice." As a eunuch definitely had no sonorous voice, so he inferred that Cheng Ho had not been fully castrated. Therefore, Cheng Ho was not a eunuch at all. I wish to call the reader's attention to the fact that Yuan Chung-Tch'eh was a physiognomist whose aim in describing Cheng Ho's features was to explain the elements of Cheng Ho's noble nature. It is neither a first hand source nor an official record, but a tale connected with physiognomy. How could we take it as an evidence?

There is a joke which may be mentioned here as an aftertaste of this problem. A small temple called "San Pao Niang Niang Miao" (三寶娘娘廟), or Temple of Cheng Ho's Consort, has been discovered in Singapore, built by some adventurers as a means of earning their livelihood.

3. WHERE IS THE "WEST OCEAN" AND WHAT IS ITS ORIGIN?

The term "West Ocean" is literally translated from the Chinese characters "Hsi Yang" (西洋). Actually, it should be translated as "West Sea Route" which covered the regions from Indo-China, Malaya and Sumatra running westward to India, Persia, Arabia and the east coast of Africa. Since the Han Dynasty, this region

was known as the "Nan Hai" (南海) or the South Seas up to the Sung Dynasty, and navigation during those days had no systematic routes yet. During the Yuan or Mongol Dynasty, the Chinese navigators systematically divided the South Seas into two Routes: the "Hsi Yang" (西洋) or the West Ocean as mentioned above, and the "Tung Yang" (東洋) or East Ocean, including the eastern part of Southeast Asia. As the word "Yang (洋) (Ocean) here is actually a synonym of "Sea" (海), so "Hsi Yang" means the West Sea Route and "Tung Yang" indicates the East Sea Route, and the demarcation line were the Straits of Karimata and the Straits of Sunda. These two Sea Routes were subdivided again as mentioned in Chen Ta-Chin's (陳大震) "Nan Hai Tchih" (南海志) as follows:

1. The north coasts of Borneo and the Philippines were regarded as the "Small East Sea Route".
2. From the west to the east coasts of Borneo and from Celebes to Muluccas Islands, the whole coastal region was regarded as the "North Line of the Greater East Sea Route".
3. The coastal region stretching from Java to Timor Island was regarded as the "South Line of the Greater East Sea Route".
4. Malay Peninsula was regarded as the "North Line of the Small West Sea Route".
5. Sumatra was the "South Line of the Small West Sea Route".
6. Unfortunately Chen Ta-Chin omitted mentioning the "Greater West Sea Route" which stretched along the coastal region running from India to Arabia.

About two hundred years after Cheng Ho's Expeditions, Chang Hsieh recorded a major alteration of the Routes in his "Tung Hsi Yang K'ao". The dividing line for the East and West Sea Routes had been removed from Karimata Straits to Brunei and there were no more subdivisions either. While in the Ching

Dynasty, even the major division of the East and West Seas had been obscured and the term "Nanyang" (South Seas 南洋) appeared in many documents and literature in China up to now.

4. DID CHENG HO EVER VISIT BRUNEI AND THE PHILIPPINES?

Casual remarks about Cheng Ho's visit to Brunei were found in some books, but they were never recorded in official chronicles. The reason why people were fond of telling such groundless stories is none other than to accord honour to Cheng Ho. Of course, there are people who may like to borrow Cheng Ho's name for the sake of doing business. Two years ago, some one from Borneo showed to the present writer a dragon-patterned gong and suggested that it was an instrument left by Cheng Ho during his visit to Borneo. Since neither a record of its discovery nor a proof by a c14 examination ever existed, no one could confirm it. During Cheng Ho's time, Brunei was placed in the Small East Sea Route which Cheng Ho did not touch, so we could give our denial to the report.

It is therefore safe to say that Cheng Ho did not make any visit to the Philippines which was also in the same Small East Sea Route as Brunei, but Prof. Chiaomin Hsieh in his article on "Geographical Exploration by the Chinese" (in the book entitled "The Pacific Basin, a History of its Geographical Exploration," pp. 87–97, published by the American Geographical Society), mentioned that Cheng Ho had actually visited Philippines several times, based on Chinese reports. Unfortunately, he mistook the term Tchan Tch'eng (占城) i.e. Champa as an old name of the Philippines.

5. HOW MANY VOYAGES DID CHENG HO MAKE? SEVEN OR EIGHT?

Nearly all the Chinese accounts of Cheng Ho's expeditions said that he sailed to the West Ocean seven times, particulars of which are given as follows:—

1. Between 1405–1407, Cheng Ho went abroad together with Wang Ching Hung (王景弘) and visited Champa, Java, Palembang, Malacca, Sumatra and Calicut. He then captured the chief of Palembang named Chen Tsu-Yi (陳祖義) and let Shih Chin-Ching (施進卿) succeed him as a Chinese Officer.
2. Between 1407–1409, he went abroad again together with Wang Ching-Hung and Wang Kui-T'ung (王貴通) and visited Java, Calicut, Ceylon and Siam. He presented a stone inscription to a temple in Ceylon.
3. Between 1409–1411, he went abroad again together with Wang Ching-Hung, Hou Hsien and Fei Hsin to visit Champa, Java, Malacca, Aru, Sumatra, Calicut, Cochin, Jurfattan, Quiron, Lambri, Koyampadi, Ceylon, Maldives, Andaman, Djeffer, Aden, Mecca, Ormuz, Magadoxo, Brawa and Juba. He captured King Alagak-Konara (亞烈苦奈兒) of Ceylon and chose Yapanaina (耶巴乃那) to be the king instead.
4. Between 1413–1415, he went abroad again with Wang Chin-Hung, Ma Huan, Ha San, (哈三) and certain other military commanders to visit Champa, Kelantan, Pahang, Java, Sunda, Sumatra, Malacca, Aru, Lambri, Ceylon, Calicut, Cochin, Cail, Brawa, Ormuz, Maldives, Malinde, Mogedoxu, Arabia and Misr (Egypt). He captured Sekandar, (蘇幹剌) king of Sumatra (Atcheh) and then installed a new king.
5. Between 1416–1419, Cheng Ho was abroad again accompanied by Priest Shen Huei (勝慧), Commanders Chu Chen (朱真)

and T'ang Chin (唐敬) and visited Champa, Pahang, Malacca, Sumatra, Lambri, Java, Ceylon, Malinde, Mogedoxu, Brawa, Jurfattan, Al-Ahsa, Ormuz, Calicut, Maldives, Aden, etc. On his way back to Nanking, he visited Ch'uan Chou to worship the Islamic sage's tomb and inscribed a stone tablet to record his visit and worships.

6. Between 1421–1422, he went abroad again together with other eunuchs such as Yang Ming, (楊敏), Li K'ai (李愷), T'ang Kuan-Pao (唐觀保) K'ong Ho Po Hua (孔和卜花), Hung Pao (洪保), Chou Man (周滿), Li Hsin (李興), Yang Ching (楊慶) to visit Palembang, Bengal, Koyampadi, Ceylon, Zufar, Mogedoxu, Ormuz, Al-Ahsa, Brawa, Aden, Cail, Lambri, Cochin, Aru, Maldives, Calicut, Sumatra, Malacca, etc.
7. Between 1431–1433, Cheng Ho went abroad once more together with a group of eunuchs, Wang Ching Hung, Li Hsin, Chu Liang (朱良), Hung Pao, Yang Chen, Chang Tah (張達), Wu Chung (吳忠), Chu Chen (朱真), Wang Heng (王興), Chou Fuh (周福) or Chou Man, with interpreters in the persons of Ma Huan, Fei Hsin, Kung Chen, Kuh Shun-Li, etc. and visited Malacca, Aru, Lambri, Sumatra, Ceylon, Cochin, Calicut, Maldives, Brawa, Ormuz, Mogedoxu, Al-Ahsa, Cail, Koyampadi, Zufar, Juba and Palembang Settlement. There is a complete record of this voyage given in Tchuh Y'un-Ming's "Ch'ian Wen Chi" (前聞記). Cheng Ho had inscribed three stone tablets in the Tien Fei Temple (天妃宮) at Liu Tung (婁東), Nan Shan Temple (南山寺) at Ch'ang Leh (長樂), and in the Chin Hai Temple (靜海寺) at Nanking showing permanent records of his seven expeditions.

Besides the seven great voyages, there was another voyage made by Cheng Ho which was mentioned in the Account of Cheng Ho in Ming Shih. It runs, "In the First Moon of the 22nd Year of

the Reign of Yung Leh (1424), Shih Chi Sun (施濟孫), Chief of Palembang, begged to succeed to his father's position as a 'Hsuan Hui Shih' (宣慰使 Governor); Cheng Ho went to bestow on him a seal for the said position. When he came back, the Emperor Ch'eng Tsu had already died." It also appeared in Ming Shih Luh in this manner, "On the day of Chia Chen (甲辰 the 22nd day) in the 1st moon in the 22nd year of the Reign of Yung Leh 1424, Chi-Sun, the son of the late governor of Palembang Shih Chin-Ching, sent his envoy Chiu Yen-Cheng (丘彥成) to express his desire to succeed to his father's post and supplicating the Emperor for a new seal as the old one had been destroyed by fire. The Emperor then conferred him authority to succeed to his father's position as a governor and bestowed upon him an official hat, a golden girdle, brocades, robes and a silver official seal. It was Cheng Ho who was officially sent to deliver these gifts."

Although nobody could deny that this voyage took place, the question is why did Cheng Ho fail to mention it in his three stone inscriptions, and why was it omitted in Ming Shih Cheng Tsu Pen Chi (明史成祖本紀). We can only suppose that he might regard it as a short voyage to a simple destination which was not worthy of mention in comparison with the seven big expeditions.

6. WHAT IS THE DATE OF CHENG HO'S CHART?

Since a Chart was used by Cheng Ho, people presumed that it was drawn by his followers as a record of their voyages. But in the present writer's opinion, it would appear more likely to be their guide chart rather than their own drawn record of their itinerary; therefore its date must be earlier than Cheng Ho's Expeditions, or it might be a revised copy based on an old chart, the date of which could not be later than the Yuan Dynasty. As we know that the navigation in Southeast Asia during the Yuan Dynasty proved

to be a major improvement, as has already been mentioned in Section 3 above, the West Sea Route had been established and Cheng Ho's itinerary embodying his seven expeditions was limited as it were, so he used this chart as a guide, and only added some small amendments probably meant for recording purposes, but they were very simple and few.

Referring to the Chart, there were some islands falling within the scope of the East Sea Route, such as Java, Tjirebon (吉利悶), Gelam Island (交蘭山), Karimata (假里馬達), Brunei (萬年嶼), but there was not even one single name of a place ever recorded on such islands. Although Cheng Ho visited Java, it was Ma Huan who took the trouble to include it in his book, Yin Ya Shen Lan, giving the following excerpt:

> Java (爪哇) State, known as Tu [She] P'o (闍婆) State in ancient times, consists of four places without city walls. When foreign ships come to this place, firstly they touch on Tuban (杜板), secondly they arrive at a place called New Village (革兒昔 — Geresik), after which they anchor at a place called Su-lu-ma-ih (蘇魯馬益), i.e. Surabaya, thence to Majapahit (滿者伯夷) where the king stays.

Not even one out of these four places was recorded on Java Island as shown in the Chart, yet the city Tjirebon was separated from Java as an adjacent island on the east, and Borneo was recorded as Wan Nien Island (literally means the Ten-Thousand-Year Island). All these are evidences to prove that the Chart drawer had no knowledge of the East Sea Route. If the Chart was drawn by Cheng Ho or his followers, they must know that Tjirebon was in Java Island and that Borneo, then named Wen Lai (文萊) or P'o Luo (婆羅), should not be recorded as Wan Nien Island, even though he did not visit these places in the East Sea Route. Therefore, it must be an old chart of the West Sea Route carried down from the Mongol Dynasty.

7. WHAT WAS THE SIZE OF CHENG HO'S SHIPS?

As it was mentioned in Ming Shih that Cheng Ho had led a troop of some 27,800 men with a fleet of 62 big vessels, each measuring 440 feet in length and 180 feet in width, people were astonished at the ships' sizes and at the shape, with a proportion ratio of 7 (in length) to 3 (in width). If a ship had such dimension, it was no other than Noah's Ark and was impossible for navigation purpose. Usually, the proportion ratio of a modern vessel is 9 to 1.

With reference to the stone inscription left by Cheng Ho in Chai Hai Temple at Nanking, it was recorded that the biggest capacity of his vessels was 1500 to 2000 "liao" (料 — unit) but no measurement was given. If we based on the Record of Lung Chiang Shipyard at Nanking (南京龍江船廠志) on 100 to 400 "liao" ships, we could make out the measurement of the 2000 "liao" vessels as follows:–

(a) The whole length should be 166 feet.
(b) The length from the front of the bottom to the end 102.6 feet.
(c) The tail of the vessel without bottom 23.4 feet.
(d) Depth of the front 6.9 feet.
(e) Width of the front 19.5 feet.
(f) Width of the middle part 24.3 feet.
(g) Depth of the middle part 8.1 feet.
(h) Width of the tail 21.6 feet.
(i) Depth of the tail 12 feet.
(j) The shape proportion should be 7 to 1.

Although the above calculated size is only about 38% of the given length in Ming Shih and 13.5% of the given width, yet it would still be regarded as a giant vessel in the early Ming Period, some 570 years ago.

Chapter 8

DID ADMIRAL CHENG HO VISIT THE PHILIPPINES?

Hsu Yun-Ts'iao

One day during the session of the Fourth International Conference on Asian History held at University of Malaya from 5th to 10th August, 1968, Dr Carlos Quirino, Director, Museum of Philippine History and Iconographic Archive, put me a question: "Did Admiral Cheng Ho visit the Philippines?" I replied in the negative. I told him that where Cheng Ho visited was limited to "Hsi Yang" (西洋 literally, "West Seas") which was separated by the South China Sea and Straits of Sunda from "Tung Yang" (東洋 literally, "East Seas"). Java was the only island in "Tung Yang" visited by Cheng Ho's Fleet. This was given in Cheng Ho's chart, which appeared in Mao Yuan Yi's Wu Pei Chih (茅元儀：武備志), Vol. 240, without the indication of any name of places on the island. Pilotage from Hsi Yang to the island was not recorded in the Chart, because it was a special case for him to visit. But Java was included in Hsi Yang in the later period of Ming Dynasty as it was recorded in Tung Hsi Yang K'ao (東西洋考) by Chang Hsieh (張燮) in 1617. Moreover, the name the Philippines or alternative had never appeared in any document connected with Cheng Ho.

Reprinted from Hsu Yun-Ts'iao, "Did Admiral Cheng Ho Visit the Philippines?", *Journal of Southeast Asian Research* 4 (December 1968): 96–98, by permission of the publisher.

Dr Quirino seemed very much astonished at my explanation and said that he had read a book published by the American Geographical Society, giving inference of Cheng Ho's visit to the Philippines, and the author of the article is a famous scholar in USA, whose theory derive from Chinese sources. Thereupon I asked Dr Quirino to obtain a copy of the thesis for me to read before I would expound further on the subject.

Soon after his return to the Philippines, Dr Quirino sent me a copy of the article entitled "Geographical Exploration by the Chinese" written by Chiao-min Hsieh, professor of geography at the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., and was published in "The Pacific Basin, a History of its Geographical Exploration" (pp. 87–97), edited by Herman R. Friis. In the first part of his paper, Prof. Hsieh mentions the early Chinese conception of geographical aspects and in the later part he talks about Cheng Ho's voyages, illustrated with reproductions of a section of Cheng Ho's Chart and two figures of astronomical pilotage (過洋牽星圖) from Wu Pei Chih.

Prof. Hsieh mentioned that he based on three sources to summarize Cheng Ho's seven explorations: (1) the official record and the annals of the reigns of the Ming Dynasty, (2) tablet inscriptions discovered on the coast of Fukien Province, and (3) three books written by the members of Cheng Ho's expedition.

With reference to the First Expedition, Prof. Hsieh's article runs, "In the winter of the same year (1405) it set out for voyages in the Pacific, including in its itinerary the Philippines, Java, Sumatra, Malaya, Ceylon, and Calicut on the west coast of India."

As much as I know, the sources of materials on Cheng Ho's expeditions make no mention of Cheng's call at the Philippines. How could Prof. Hsieh have included the Philippines in the itinerary? When I referred to the above mentioned sources, I found that Prof. Hsieh mistook Chan Cheng (占城) for an old name of

the Philippines. Chan Cheng was a Chinese name for Champa then in Ming Dynasty. It was called Lin-i (林邑), Chan-p'o (占婆) or Huan-wang (環王) in earlier Chinese dynastic chronicles. It was a Malay state in Indo-China Peninsula, but it was controlled by Indian immigrants. George Maspero of France had compiled a History of Champa in 1909.

Referring to the Seventh Expedition, Prof. Hsieh writes, "This time Cheng left many tablet inscriptions and written records and so we know more of this expedition than of the others. The complement of 26,755 persons included soldiers, sailors, cooks, medical doctors, and carpenters. He left Nanking in July 1431 for Foochow. He waited there until the next year, when he voyaged as far west as the Red Sea and the coast of Africa, returning to China in July 1433."

My knowledge shows that Cheng Ho did not give more details on the last expedition either in the tablet inscriptions or in his followers' books. We do know more on the last voyage in Chuh Yun-ming's Chien Wen Chi (祝允明：前聞記). In this book we found that (a) the number of the members in this last expedition was 27,550; (b) Cheng left Nanking for Liu Chia Kang in Kiangsu Province on the 6th day of the 13th month (閏十二月初六日) in the 5th year of the reign of Hsuan Teh (宣德 1430). There he waited until the 26th day of 2nd moon in the following year and sailed abroad as far west as Ormuz in the Persian Gulf, and returned to Nanking on the 6th day of 7th moon in the 8th year of the same reign (1433). These accounts are contrary to Prof. Hsieh's citations quoted above.

Besides, there are few comments which might be added to Prof. Hsieh's paper: (1) Prof. Hsieh says, "Cheng Ho commonly known as Three Eunuch", but actually, Cheng Ho is known as "Three-Precious Eunuch" which derived from "San Pao Hsin Kuan", literally, "Three Precious Envoy", which was then occasionally

used in early Ming period. So "San Pao" (三寶) was not the partial name of Cheng Ho, because whosoever performed the duty of the designated office could be called "San Pao" too, such as Wang Ching-Hung (王景弘) named Wang San Pao, Yang Min (楊敏) called Yang San Pao, etc. "San Pao" seemed as an imperial court designation.

(2) Prof. Hsieh states that Cheng Ho served as a military officer in Nanking for two years and died in 1435 at the age of 65. I know he based his findings on the Account of Cheng Ho in Ming Shih (明史), but it should be known that in the same dynastic chronicle, Vol. 8, under the caption of Ren Tsung Pen Chi (仁宗本記), it runs, "On the day of Fu Tse (戊子 = 17th day) of 9th moon in 22nd year of the reign of Yung Leh (1423), Li Lung, Count of Hsiang Yang, was appointed as the first military officer of Nanking." This is also mentioned in the Account of Li Chun in the same chronicle, Vol. 146, so Prof. Feng Cheng-Chun had pointed out in his History of the Contacts between China and South Seas as early as in 1936.

(3) In Prof. Hsieh's paper, it runs, "Cheng Ho's expeditions were responsible for the publication of several books of great importance to geographical knowledge about the Pacific and Indian Oceans. The earliest, in 1434, was the Hsi Yang Fan Kuo Chih (西洋番國志) by Kung Chen (鞏珍). The second which quickly followed the first was Hsing Chha Sheng Lan (星槎勝覽). Then in 1451, Ma Huan (馬歡), one of the Chinese Moslem interpreters, produced the Ying Ya Sheng Lan (瀛涯勝覽)." — Regarding this my comment is that Hsi Yang Fan Kuo Chih was not the earliest one, but it was cribbed entirely from Ying Ya Sheng Lan which was compiled by Ma Huan in 1416 and revised by himself in 1451.

(4) Prof. Hsieh holds the belief that Cheng Ho's Chart was not made prior to 1433 by Cheng Ho's staff, but the present writer holds his point of view that it might be combined together with many separate sections already prepared by various navigators

during Yuan Dynasty when the Southeast Asian waters had been divided into two practicable navigation routes, namely "Hsi Yang" and "Tung Yang". Of course, it could have been revised by Cheng Ho's staff basing on their own voyage undertakings and experience.

(5) About the early explorations by the Chinese, Prof. Hsieh writes, "While the Taoists were exploring northward from China, the Buddhists travelled southwest to India, the birthplace of Buddhism." For the so-called Taoists' explorations, Prof. Hsieh might have inadvertently regarded as the travels of Mu-Tien-Tse (穆天子) and Hsu Fu (徐福). If so, that is not appropriate. In fact, these travellers actually travelled westward and eastward respectively, but not northward. However, we found that the Taoists also travelled south-ward, such as Keh Hung (葛洪 250–330) visited Funan and recorded his geographical knowledge on Southeast Asia in those days in his book entitled "The Pure Alchemy and Immortal Pill Refining" (太清金液丹經). His exploration was much earlier than that of Fa Hsien (法顯) between 399–414, and of Hsuan Chuang (玄奘) between 627–645 and of I-Tsing (義淨) between 671–695. Keh Hung's book is the only available one on the earliest Chinese source materials on historical geography of Southeast Asia in the 4th Century.

Notes

1. Dr Quirino sent me the second section of the paper (pp. 90–97), while Dr Yong Ching-fatt of University of Singapore assisted me in getting the first section (pp. 87–89), for which I thank them both very much.
2. See "Preliminary Bibliography of the Southeast Asian Studies", *The Bulletin of the Institute of Southeast Asia*, p. 27, Vol. 1, Nanyang University, 1959, and "A General Study of History", pp. 100–101 and 114–115 (Singapore: Youth Book Co., 1966).

3. See present writer's "Notes on Malaya as recorded in Hsi Yang Pilotages" (西洋針路上的馬來亞), New Year's Supplement for 1965 of Nanyang Siang Pao Press, Singapore.
4. Other works on Cheng Ho's Voyages by the present writer are listed below:
   (a) "Notes on Admiral Cheng Ho's Voyages", *Journal of South Seas Society*, Vol. V, pt. 1, pp. 42–53, 1948.
   (b) *Annotation to P'eng Ho-ling's Novel of Cheng Ho's Voyage* (Singapore, World Book Co., 1959).
   (c) Revision and Annotation to the Ming Drama of Cheng Ho's Voyage, ditto, 1962.
   (d) "Notes on Two Forgotten Ways of Measuring Latitude", Souvenir Programme of "Cheng Ho Night", pp. 10–20, Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, Singapore, 1967.

Chapter 9

LONGYAMEN IS SINGAPORE: The Final Proof?

Chung Chee Kit

INTRODUCTION

Ever since I was a child, Admiral Zheng He[1] has held my imagination. I remember very well the stories which my father told me about his exploits. When I studied Chinese history during my secondary school days, I was disappointed that his entire enterprise was worth only three or four lines in the history text; and yet there were chapters after chapters of Columbus, Vasco da Gama, Bartholomew Diaz, Magellan and Captain Cook. I wondered whether there was a worldwide conspiracy to keep the great findings of this remarkable Asian navigator a secret. That drove me to want to find out more about him.

My fascination about him grew after I graduated in Naval Architecture, and began working as an engineer in Keppel Shipyard. My understanding of the technical aspects of seafaring made me realize that the technologies which he employed was very advanced. The shipyard where I worked was at the "Longyamen"

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itself. Many a time I stood at the wharves at Telok Blangah and Bukit Chermin and imagined the ghosts of the great Treasure Fleet sailed pass in my mind's eye.

"THE FRIENDS OF ADMIRAL ZHENG HE"

I was not alone in this fascination. My colleague in Keppel Shipyard, Mr Ng Siong Tee, held a similar passion. While mine was more technical and marine based, his interests was the historical, cultural and religious significance of Zheng He's voyages. Over the year, he accumulated a collection of models and books on the subject. Last year, we felt that it was time to put our lifelong passion into something more concrete. We decided to set up a special interest group — "The Friends of Admiral Zheng He". We were very pleasantly surprised to find that there is an underground community of secret Zheng He admirers who is beginning to make themselves known.

WHY IS THE LOCATION OF LONGYAMEN IMPORTANT TO SINGAPOREANS?

Why should Singaporeans be interested in whether Longyamen is Singapore? Is it an issue that needs to be resolved now? Why not let this controversy go on and on? The reasons are as follow:

Did Zheng He Pass by Singapore?

In 1992, the whole Western world was abuzz with activities relating to the 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' discovery of the New World. All over the Americas, there were celebratory events, from the Tall Ships Festivals, conventions, seminars and exhibitions, to demonstrations by native Americans. Besides its significance to the leisure and tourism industries, an important

anniversary like this serves to spur on scholarship, understanding and, indeed, reassessment of the original event.

The 600th Anniversary of Zheng He's voyages is just round the corner. His first voyage began in the summer of 1405. If the Columbus Centennial is any thing to go by, Asia will see a great revival of interest of Zheng He. And this time, the interest will not only be confined to Asia. Partly due to the growing importance of China (and therefore all things Chinese), and the effort of such people like Gavin Menzies, whose bold claims about the discovery of Zheng He's fleets have made the West sit up and notice this name, the 600th Anniversary will also attract the attention of the West.[2] How can Singapore take advantage of this celebratory event?

Certain locations and ports are clearly linked to Zheng He's voyages, examples being: Nanjing, Quanzhou, Malacca, Aceh, Semarang, Sri Lanka, Hormuz etc. Singapore as we now know it did not exist in the 15th century. There is no record of Zheng He ever landing here. Therefore we cannot claim that we were a port of call of the Treasure Fleet. However, the "Zheng He Navigation Chart" (郑和航海图) marked an important sailing route between China and the Western Oceans, and it went by a place called Longyamen. It was an important landmark. If Longyamen was indeed Singapore, the pre-colonial Singaporeans would have had the wonderful treat of watching the magnificent Treasure Fleet sailing right pass their shores. We can then claim our place in the worldwide celebration of Zheng He's anniversary as *the place whose waters the Admiral must pass on his way to the West.*

The Location of Temasek

The second reason for the importance of resolving this issue is that the location of Longyamen is related to the location of Temasek.

The *existence* of Temasek is well recorded in Chinese, Malay[3] and Javanese[4] text. The *location* of Temasek however was fixed through reference to Chinese texts alone. Several references of Temasek (Tumasik) occurred in the Chinese records as being next to or near Longyamen. Therefore, by refuting that Longyamen is Singapore (as Mr Lin Wo Ling has done[5]), we open up the Pandora box of Temasek not being Singapore.

Purely at an emotional level, as a Singaporean, I cannot accept this. Singapore's historical heritage is so meagre that I cannot bear the thought of losing this defining identity of our island nation. Yet, if those of us who believe otherwise choose to keep quiet, people may come to accept that Longyamen is indeed somewhere else, especially if eminent scholars also accept this view. We will lay open the possibility that one day history will be revised, perhaps by non-Singaporeans. In that day, we may have to rename Temasek Holding as Riau Holdings, or Temasek Junior College as Lingga Junior College.

Contributing to More Holistic Study of the Subject

A third reason for wanting to resolve the issue of whether Longyamen is Singapore is that in every field of study, the deep approach adopted by experts in their area of specialisation must be balanced by a broad and holistic approach moderated by understanding from other related disciplines. My sense of the past study of the Longyamen matter is that it was mostly looked upon as a historical issue, and hence there was a tendency to depend on ancient (in many cases tenuous and indirect) references to draw inferences. I believe that the validity of many such inferences can readily be checked through cross references to other disciplines. For example, much of the attempt to determine the location of a place was through the etymology of the place names. From an

outsider, I find it amusing when one scholar refuted the hypothesis of another by suggesting that his Fujian dialect is lacking. Using such a criterion, I will be totally unsuited to study ancient Chinese maritime matters, as I can only speak Cantonese. (Gavin Menzies, of course, would not qualify at all.)

It is precisely because I know that my background is different from those who traditionally commit themselves to this area of study that I hope I may be able to bring some new angles to this subject.

SUMMARY OF PAST STUDIES

The location of Longyamen has been debated by many scholars. The following is a short summary of the different proposals by these scholars.

Longyamen is Lingga Straits

This view was put forward by W. P. Groeneveldt in 1876.[6] He suggested that Longyamen is at the so-called Lingga Straits.[7] He relied on Fei Xin's *Xing Cha Sheng Lan*[8] which referred to Longyamen being "Northwest of San-Fo-Chi". Subsequent scholars, including Friedrich Hirth and W. W. Rockhill[9] endorsed this view, but used other sources (*Zhu Fan Zhi*[10] and *Dong Xi Yang Kao*[11]). In so doing, he introduced the complication of the name "Ling-ya-mon" (凌牙门) into the controversy. Rockhill recognized the possibility that Ling-ya-mon and Longyamen are different places.

Longyamen is Johor Lama

This was put forward by Mr Han Wai Toon (韩槐准) in the 1940s. His proposal was prompted by the discovery of pre-Song ceramic pieces on the eastern shore of the Johore River. According to him,

Longyamen was located at the eastern end of the Johore Straits, and Tan-Ma-Hsi Men was located at the western end of the Johore Straits between "Tanjong Tua and Tanjung Bulus". His argument was supported by his interpretation of the sailing direction noted in the "Dong Xi Yang Kao", (东西洋考). Mr Han's proposal was supported by Mr H. D. Collings of the Raffles Museum.

Longyamen is Singapore Main Straits

This view was put forward by Mr J. V. Mills, who had much sailing experience in Singapore waters. According to him Longyamen is the Main Straits of Singapore (ie. between Sentosa and Batam). He used the *Wu Bei Zhi* (武备志) (commonly known as the *Zheng He Navigation Charts*—郑和航海图) to prove his point. However, his interpretation of Chinese compass bearings have been disputed by Mr Xu Yun Qiao and lately Mr Lin Wo Ling.

Longyamen is Keppel Harbour

This was put forward by Mr Xu Yun Qiao (许云樵). According to him, Longyamen and Tan-ma-hsi is the same place. Amongst other arguments, he used the Pilots' Directory *Dong Xi Yang Kao* and the *Xing Cha Sheng Lan* to prove his point. His view was strongly supported by Mr Roland Braddell, who wrote a definitive piece arguing the case in a well-known journal.[12]

This view was taken to be orthodox until the recent publication by Mr Lin Wo Ling.

REASONS FOR CONTROVERSY ON THE LOCATION

Several reasons can be put forward to explain why it has been so difficult to firmly establish the location of Longyamen. These include:

- Existence of different places with the same Chinese name; alternatively, the same place is given different Chinese names in different records. Places such as Longyamen (龙牙门/凌牙门/龙牙大山), Chang Yao Yu (长腰屿), Jia Li Men (吉利门/吉里闷/加利闷), Bai Jiao/Shi Jiao (白礁/石礁) are such examples.
- Introduction of spurious candidates or arguments through speculation on etymology of toponyms.
- Different approaches to the interpretation of Chinese compass bearings.
- Insufficient understanding of maritime usage to fully interpret navigation data contained in the various ancient Pilots' Directories.[13]

It is in this last area that this paper hopes to contribute to the understanding of this subject.

SHORT DISCUSSION ON CHINESE MARITIME TECHNOLOGY

Part of the joy of studying Zheng He's voyages is that it reveals a wonderfully advanced state of Asian maritime technology some six hundred years ago. At the time when Prince Henry the Navigator first promoted the systematic study of the mariner's art in Portugal, most of the difficult navigational problems were already fully resolved in the Far East, and international maritime trade was flourishing to such a degree that it was common place to see Arabia dhows and Chinese junks together in the same port.

An understanding of the ship operations and maritime usages in the 15th century will not only bring new insights to the study

of the life and deeds of Zheng He, but will also help separate facts from fiction by sieving out those events that are not technically possible by the technology of that time. With that in mind, I would like to give a short summary of the achievement of Chinese[14] maritime practices at the time of Zheng He.

The Junk — A Misnomer

There is a tendency to think of the Junk as somehow technologically backwards. However, in the 15th century, and right up to the time of the steamship, the Junk was the most efficient vessel afloat. In 1405, when Zheng He was setting sail with his magnificent fleet, the maritime nations of the West were sailing with small carracks. These are square rigged vessels with rather unstreamlined hull forms that were slow and inefficient. One reason was that they were developed for coastal trading, as for example, amongst the nations of the Hanseatic League in Northern Europe. Up till the age of Diaz and Vasco da Gama, there was no requirement for transocean voyages in Europe.

In contrast, regular transocean voyages have been attempted before the Tang dynasty in Asia. Persian vessels regularly call Chinese ports. There are records of sea voyages by Buddhist pilgrims to Srivijaya, India and beyond abound. Therefore, in the year 1405, the Chinese junk already had the following characteristics:

- Seaworthy and seakindly — providing for the safety as well as the comfort of the crew.
- Economically efficient — economical use of men and material, making it a viable vehicle for trade.
- Technologically advanced — with ability to sail close to the wind at good, dependable speeds.

Watertight Compartments

The Chinese have been building vessels with watertight compartments. Travellers like Ibn Battuta and Marco Polo all marveled at this safety feature, which was not introduced into Western shipping until the mid-nineteenth century. We are all familiar with the sinking of the Titanic, which boasted of its watertight compartments as an advanced technology. That was in the beginning of the 20th century! The Chinese vessels had as much as 13 or 14 compartments. Chinese vessels were built with this feature as far back as the 2nd century AD.

The presence of these watertight partitions (or bulkheads) also affected the shipbuilding and designs of Chinese junks. They provided many strong points from which masts can be erected. Therefore, multi-masted vessels appeared in China long before they appeared in Europe. Ibn Battuta reported seeing Chinese vessels off the Malabar coast with 12 sails and 1000 men on board (600 sailors and 400 soldiers) during the Yuan period. The famous Baochuan of Zheng He had 9 masts.

Because the hull of the ship is constructed more like a piece of bamboo rather than a basket (like the Carrack), there is no need for a strong centerline keel. Therefore, there is no need to locate sails on the center line of a vessel. Chinese junks therefore often had staggered masts, arranged in such a way as to take best advantage of the local wind conditions of a particular trade.

Stabilisers

Excessively rapid pitch and roll on a vessel is not only uncomfortable, but also dangerous. Long ago, the Chinese had understood the principle of reduction of the "metacentric height" of a vessel by introducing floodable compartments. In

cases where the boatman requires the vessel to roll less violently from side to side (eg. for fishermen who needs to work standing up on a sampan), he sometimes allowed the forward and after compartment to be flooded. This made the boat relatively less "stable" and therefore reduced the roll of a vessel. In open waters in a following sea,[15] junkmen often open the stern compartment to the sea, so that the stern wave could quickly flood it. This raised the bow of the vessel in an instant, helping it ride out the trough of the wave. Western vessels did not employ the concept of stabilizers[16] until the nineteenth century.

Sails

To the uninitiated, the sail of a junk is often a very sorry sight. It often looks like a patchwork of different kinds of fabric roughly stitched together. Often it is full of holes. However, herein lies its technological brilliance: the sail of a junk can make use of cheap, even scrap, material, whereas western sailing ships must have the entire sail made of good quality and expensive sailcloth.

The secret of the Chinese sail is firstly in the use of battens for stiffening, and secondly in its "balanced lugsail" arrangement. The bamboo battens that are a common feature of junks serve to stiffen the sail, so that it is always more or less flat, and hence aerodynamically efficient. The western sail sometimes bellows in the middle, causing unnecessary turbulence, and reducing its efficiency. This is particularly true when sailing close to the wind.[17] The Chinese sailors were very proud of this close hauling ability of their ships, and said: "The wind has eight directions; the good ship can sail seven."

Most people will notice another feature of the Western sailing ship which is absent in the junk: the shrouds and ratlines. In a

storm, or in port, Western sailors need to climb up to the top of the sails to "reef" or furl up the sail. This is often done in anticipation of a storm, because if the sails are not furled up tight, they may be shredded to bits. This operation is extremely dangerous. Hence, sailors had an expression: "One hand for the ship, the other hand for yourself." They needed the shrouds and ratlines to climb up. Chinese sailors, on the other hand, never had to climb up any sail. In storm or in port, they haul down the entire sail from the deck, which is a much safer operation. On the rare occasions a Chinese sailor needs to climb up the sail (eg. to adjust the weathercock) he uses the sail battens.

Chinese junks are designed to sail close to the wind. This requires tacking, which requires the sails to be switched from one side of the ship to another. This is a relatively easy operation on a junk. In the case of a Western full rigged ship, setting the sail from one side to another involved resetting a huge numbers of individual sails, and often there is not enough time to do it all at once. Hence, square rigged ships cannot tack effectively. Instead, they "wear" — ie. going against the wind in a figure-of-eight pattern. This is extremely inefficient.

Rudder

Until the 12th century AD, rudders were unknown in the West. Like the compass, it was introduced through contacts with Chinese sailors. On the other hand, the stern rudder that we are so familiar with had been used at least from the Han dynasty. Early Western ships steered using a "steering oar" or "steering board". These are ineffective for larger vessels, and require great physical effort to handle. Without the introduction of the stern rudder to Europe, it is unlikely that the great voyages of discovery of Columbus and Diaz could be conducted.

The Chinese had refined the rudder to a very high state of efficiency. Very long ago, they discovered that a rudder that had holes in it made it easier to turn, and yet has no effect on the turning circle of the ship. They developed what is called the "fenestrated" rudder.[18] They also found that a rudder with the rudder stock somewhere near the centre is easier for turning. They developed the "balanced rudder". These features did not appear in the West, until the power and speed of steamships required such great force in turning the rudder that both the fenestrated and balanced rudder were adopted by the Royal Navy torpedo boats in the late nineteenth century.

Propulsion

Besides wind power, Chinese vessels are propelled by several different methods:

- Paddling
- Rowing[19]
- Poling
- Tracking
- Sculling

The various propulsion methods deserve a Paper on their own. The first four are also common in the West. However, the method called "sculling" or "yuloh" (摇橹) is uniquely Chinese. It involves an oar-like device pivoted at the stern of a vessel,[20] held in place with a rope. The boatman pulls the handle backwards and forwards in a rocking action, causing the scull to behave like a fish tail. This propels the vessel forward.

Sculling is not made for speed, but is particularly useful in the Chinese environment, for example, in the busy inland waterways and canals of Jiangnan. A boatman can scull non-stop for a day

and is not fatigued. Located at the rear end of the boat, it leaves the rest available for cargo. It takes up little space on the water except the width of the boat, and therefore can proceed even in very congested waters.

Some of Zheng He's vessels are fitted with these sculls to aid them during port maneuvers and period of calm.[21]

The Compass

The early invention of the magnetic compass by the Chinese is a generally known fact. The first use was in geomancy, and its maritime use probably came in the 9th century. The Chinese also knew about magnetic declination as early as the 11th century. In our study of the sailing directions in the various Pilots' Directories, we have not taken magnetic declination into account. In future studies, this issue should be investigated.

Dead Reckoning[22]

Measuring speed and distance traveled at sea poses many challenges. Account needs to be taken of wind, current and the drift of the ship. It is truly an art instead of a science.

In this area, the Chinese and Western methods are very similar. In both case, the sailor stands at the bow of the ship and throws overboard a small piece of wood. He then walks towards the stern of the vessel at a brisk, standard pace. When he reaches the stern, he observes whether the wood is slower or faster than him, and by how much. If the wood is faster, the ship is said to be "exceeding the watch"; if slower, "short of the watch" (上更/不上更). The sailor then observes the wind, current and drift of the vessel, and mentally corrects the vessel's speed based on his experience against a standard "watch" or "geng".

A "geng" is both a measure of time and a measure of distance. The 24 hour day is divided into 10 "gengs", each "geng" being 2.4 hours. Distances are then quoted as being so many "gengs" apart — of course assuming a standard ship speed. Coincidentally, Chinese sailing ships commonly travels at roughly the speed of a man walking.

In the past, scholars have not studied in detail the effect of ship speed in the pin-pointing of locations. In this paper, a preliminary statistical analysis has been performed to establish the "average" speed of vessels trading in Southeast Asia, thereby eliminating some obviously untenable candidates for Longyamen.

Sounding

Sounding is the taking of water depth. It is important not only from a safety point of view, but also as a navigational aid. When the sailor is not sure of his location, the depth of a place can guide him. Sounding also establishes the nature of the seabed — whether there are corals, sand, mud or stones. The sailor ties a weight (rock or metal) to a rope and coats it with some grease or other sticky substance. He then lowers this until it touch bottom. He then pulls it up, measuring the rope by counting how many times it goes between his two outstretched hands. Each stretch is about 5–6 feet, known as a "tuo" (一托) in Chinese. The depth is thus recorded as being so many "tuos".

It is interesting to note the Western parallel. Depths are measured in "fathoms", each fathom being 6 feet, the distance between the outstretched arms of a European. This shows the universality of the family of seafarers!

Celestial Navigation

The various Chinese Pilots' Directories reveals that for coast navigation, the junkmen relied on sighting of landmarks such

as islands and headlands, assisted by the compass. In the open ocean, however, they relied on the stars.

The use of the Pole Star (北斗星) to establish the latitude of a place was widely used. However, the Chinese also use other stars, such as the Southern Cross (灯笼骨), the three stars on the constellation of the Hunter (参宿三星), alpha & gamma on the Ursa Minor (华益星) etc. The use of multiple stars allows sighting to be made when part of the sky is covered by clouds. Except for the Pole Star, the height of the other stars above the horizon is measured when they transit the meridian.

The altitude of the stars, which relates to the latitude of a location, is measured by a method called "Qian Xing Shu" (牵星术) (loosely translated as "The Art of Star Tethering"). This method is said to be Arabian in origin. It derives from the fact that for most individuals, the angle subtended by a finger set horizontally with the arm outstretched is roughly constant. Hence, the Chinese developed the "digit" (指) as the angular unit of measure for altitudes. Thus, on the Zheng He Navigation Charts, Aden (阿丹－兮亚丁) was recorded as being "5 digits by the Beichen (Pole) Star." This corresponds to Aden's true latitude of 12° 52′.

Zheng He's sailors needed something more accurate than their fingers to establish the stars' altitude. Unlike the European sailors who developed the cross-staff and astrolabe, the Chinese developed "Star Tethering Boards" (牵星板). These are a set of square boards fitted with a silk cord of fixed length. Each board corresponds to a fixed number of "digits". Thus there is a board for 9, 10, 11 digits and so on. To use the board, one end of the cord is placed next to an eye, and the board is held upright with the cord pulled taut. The board is aligned so that the bottom edge sights the horizon and the top edge sights the star. The appropriate star altitude could thus be established through the use of the appropriate board. For measurement of a fraction of a "digit", an

additional attachment is held together with the main board to give quarter, half and three quarter "digit" measures.

Ancient "Pilots' Directories"

The "Pilot Directories" are wonderful sources of information about ancient Chinese navigation practices. Not all are scientific. In fact, these pilot books start with instructions for the proper offering of prayers to the numerous deities that need to be appeased for a safe voyage. These include Tian Hou (天后/天妃), Zhou Gong (周公), Lu Ban (魯班), Guardians of the 24 Directions etc.

Information contained in these directories include: winds, weather, currents, procedure for taking water, measuring speeds, sounding, landmarks, sailing directions, observation of celestial bodies, direction setting through use of paired landmarks, etc. The collection of such information must have been highly organized, and I believe that one of the missions of Zheng He voyages was the collection of such maritime survey information. It is indeed a pity that such information was lost.

Why did Chinese Maritime Technology Lose to the West?

In the days of Zheng He, the state of development of Chinese maritime technology was way ahead of the rest of the world. Why then did it go into decline? This matter is a subject for further extensive study, but some reasons can be put forward to explain this:

- The discontinuity in the development of maritime technology arising from the Ming ban on international voyages arrested its further growth. Valuable skills were lost.

- Chinese shipbuilding methods required the use of some specific material which quickly became scarce. In particular, the giant junks of the Yuan and Ming period required huge masts which were constructed in one piece. This led to the depletion of tall, straight trees in areas of easy access to the shipyards. Eventually, the cost of construction rose exponentially as special timbers need to be transported over greater distances.[23] Large junks became economically unviable, though technically possible.
- Up to the early nineteenth century, Chinese junks could easily compete with European sailing ships for trading. However the coming of steam drastically changed this equation. Because junks sailed with the monsoons, the typical round trip lasted a year. It was a leisurely affair, with much time spent in local waters to collect and distribute local cargoes. Steamships did not have to wait for the wind. They could make half a dozen round trips between China and Southeast Asia within a year. This drastically upset the economics of junk trading.

THE WORK OF MR LIN WO LING

When Mr Lin Wo Ling reawakened the controversy of Longyamen with his publication "Longyamen Reidentified"[24] in 1999, he was already 88 years old. This testifies to his enthusiasm and dedication on this subject.

Mr Lin made a very valuable contribution to the study of this subject. His book is a useful reference to scholars because he used the following methodology:

- He summarized all the major views to date on the subject.
- He put forward clear and strong arguments against views that he considered untenable.

- He supplemented his research of historical records with the study of modern Admiralty Charts and Pilot Books.[25]
- He conducted an on-site survey of his proposed location on a boat.

Thus, his work brings research to another multi-disciplinary level.

Countering Existing Claims

Combining the use of historical records, modern charts and modern Pilot Books, he countered the four views of the location of Longyamen. The following are some of his arguments:

- Against the claim that Longyamen is Keppel Harbour or the Singapore Straits, he pointed to the sailing instructions recorded in the Zheng He Navigation Charts: "From Karimun, sailing for five watches, vessel using 112.5 deg and 120 degree, *reaches*[26] Long Waisted Island (长腰屿), exit Longyamen." He pointed out that from Karimum, taking the bearings 112.5 degrees or 120 degrees will not lead to Singapore but to Batam instead. He also mentioned that the recorded size of Zheng He's Treasure Ship made it too big to sail through this channel.
- Again, against the claim that Longyamen is Keppel Harbour or Singapore Main Straits, he interpreted the distance between Karimum to Longyamen to be 300 Chinese *li* (里). Likewise, from Longyamen to Pedra Blanca, the distance is also 300 Chinese *li*. The total distance of 600 *li* (roughly 200 miles) does not correspond to the actual direct distance between Karimun and Pedra Blanca. Hence, he inferred that the route must have taken a detour around the Riau islands.
- Against the claim that Longyamen is Singapore Main Straits, he argued that from his personal experience and from the report

of Mr C. C. Best (who supported J. V. Mills' view), tidal swirls almost amounting to whirlpools are worrying, and taking account of the strong tides, the anchoring of small vessels along the straits is impossible. Also, he noted that this claim is based on the course from Longyamen to Pedra Blanca being broken up into two sections (75 degrees and 90 degrees). This is not consistent with Chinese practice.

- Against the claim that Longyamen is Johor Lama, Mr Lin questioned Mr Han's view that Johor Lama is related to the Huang Zhi Guo[27] of the Han period, and that Longyamen is related to the ancient kingdom of Langkasuka (凌牙斯加/龙牙犀角). He did not agree with Han's assertion that Longyamen is the gateway to Langkasuka. He also disputed Han's attempt to identify his proposed location through reference to Palembang.
- Against the claim that Longyamen is in the Lingga Straits, he disputed the existence of such a strait. However, he accepted that an alternate Longyamen did exist in this area, and he identified this Longyamen as the southeast cape of Lingga Island. This Longyamen is the one referred to by the Sung and Yuan texts. Another Longyamen (the subject of this Paper) referred to by the Ming and Qing text was at another location, which he identified as Selat Riau.

The present writer agrees with Mr Lin's argument on most points except that which denies the claim that Longyamen is Keppel Harbour.

"Longyamen is at Selat Riau"

Having disputed the existing claims, Mr Lin proposed that Longyamen is at the northern entrance of Selat Riau (between

Batam and Bintan), wile Temasek is at the southern end of the same strait.

His arguments are as follows:

- From the Zheng He Navigation Chart, a bearing of 112.5 degrees from Karimun. This points to the entrance of the Selat Durian.
- He claimed that Long-Waist Island (长腰屿) is Bintan, on account of its shape.
- He disclaimed that Wang Da Yuan's "Dao Yi Zhi Lue[28] account of Temasek and Longyamen pointed to Singapore, but instead it should point to Lingga Peak (龙牙大山) on Lingga Island. Mr Lin felt that Singapore cannot be Wang's 14th century description of Temasek , for he assumed that Singapore was then inhabited by Orang Laut, and had no produce to trade. This assumption is perhaps not born out by archaelogical evidence.
- He chose to reject the commonsensical belief that the most logical route between the South China Sea and the Straits of Malacca (and the western oceans) is through the channel(s) south of Singapore main island. Instead, he chose the roundabout route of going down Selat Durian and up Selat Riau. His explanation is that the Singapore channels are treacherous, while the Riau channels are calm.

REFUTATION OF MR LIN'S PROPOSAL

My Methodology

I am in full agreement with Mr Lin's approach of using a better understanding of ancient and modern navigation knowledge to interpret the historical records. My methodology is therefore similar to Mr Lin's. However, I came to different conclusions:

Counter Arguments

- *Ambiguous Bearings on Ancient Sailing Instructions*: The two most authoritative references to the location of Longyamen can be found in 1) Zheng He Navigation Charts and 2) the Pilots' Directory "Shun Feng Xiang Song — Directions from Guangdong to Malacca'.[29] In both cases, the bearing (or back bearing) taken from Pedra Blanca indicates that Longyamen is Keppel Harbour. Therefore there is no ambiguity between Longyamen and Pedra Blanca. The confusion comes from the bearing between Karimun and Longyamen. This confusion clears when we consider that the Karimun is meant only as a landmark, not a destination (see note 44). The vessel did not reach Karimun, only sail till Karimun is sighted. Combined with the fact that the stretch between Karimun and Longyamen are scattered with numerous islands, it is obvious that this leg is not steered by compass alone. Rather, it is sailed by sight. To support this, I quote the "Shun Feng Xiang Song" which clearly gave the instruction that Longyamen was not be transited at night.[30]
- *Long Waist Island*: In the Zheng He Navigation Chart, the sailor was instructed to sight Long Waist Island before transiting Longyamen (sailing west to east). In "Shun Feng Xiang Song", the sailor was instructed to pass Longyamen and then sail parallel to Long Waist Island. Clearly, if Longyamen is Keppel Harbour, then Long Waist Island must be Singapore mainland. Is this consistent with the facts? The answer is yes. Singapore was referred to as Pulo de Isle Panjang, or Long Island, on a 1755 map by Bellin. From the sea, the Kent Ridge and Faber Ridge with a lower ridge in between fits the description of a "long waist". In contrast, Mr Lin did not offer strong support

for his claim that this island was Bintan, which must be key to his argument.

- *Sailing Time Between Karimun via Longyamen to Pedra Blanca*: The total sailing time between Karimun (or more accurately the turning point after the sighting of Karimun) via Longyamen to Pedra Blanca is 10 "watches" or 24 hours, assuming some notional "standard speed" of a 15th century junk. This sailing time is reaffirmed in the "Shun Feng Xiang Song". The question is: how to establish this "standard speed"?

This can be established by statistical analysis of indicated standard sailing time between clearly identified (ie. unambiguous) port pairs derived from the Pilots' Directories. Both "Shun Feng Xiang Song" and "Zhi Nan Zheng Fa" provides many examples of such standard sailing times. Since the distances between these port pairs are known, it is easy to calculate the assumed ship speed. From this analysis (see Appendix), we established that the absolute ship speed (ie. relative to land) is 3.8 knots, and ranges between 2.8 knots to 5.3 knots. With this information, we can combine with the indicated bearings to narrow down the possible location of a place.

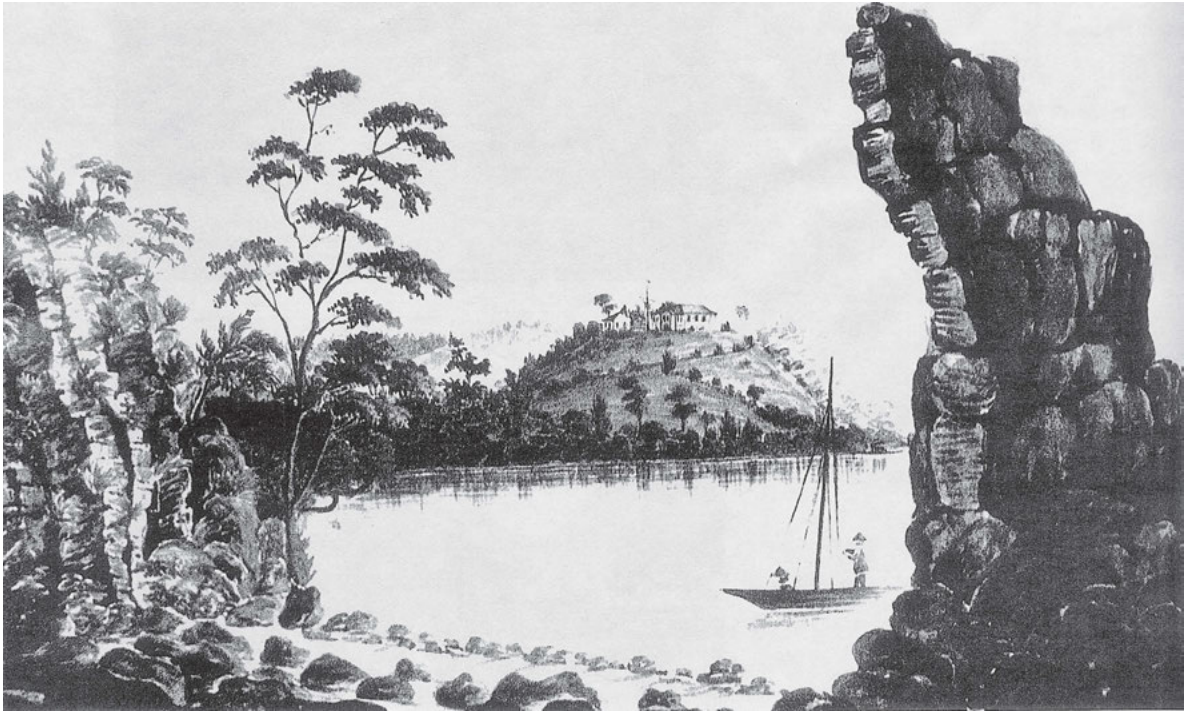
Mr Lin Wo Ling proposed that Longyamen is in the north entrance of Selat Riau. According to him, vessels from Malacca to China went pass Karimun, through the Selat Durian, round Pulau Galang in the Riau group, up Selat Riau (passing his proposed site for Temasek), exit the north entrance of Selat Riau towards Pedra Blanca. This represents a total distance of 280 kilometres, or 151 nautical miles. To make this distance in the time indicated in the Pilots' Directories would require the vessel to travel at 6.3 knots — a speed not recorded in the sample of port pairs that I studied. For this routing to be valid, the junk will have to travel at almost twice the average recorded speed. Furthermore, this

U-shaped route will require running, reaching and tacking on a given wind direction. Based on this alone, Mr Lin's proposal cannot be right.

Mr Lin's approach fell short on the following counts:

- Like the many scholars before him, no systematic account has been taken of the ship speeds. They therefore ignored a valuable criterion for cross-checking to limit the range of possibilities. His acceptance of the old standard that one "geng" represents 60 *li*[31] caused him to assume a more lengthy route than the direct one between Karimun and Pedra Blanca.
- Inconsistent reliance on the Pilots' Directories. In his proposal, he added detours and changes in directions in an area filled with waterways and islands. It does not make sense for the Pilots' Directories not to put these changes in if indeed his proposed route was the actual one taken. After all, Pilots' Directories are not spurious pieces of literature, but specific manuals whose strict observance can mean life and death to the sailors. He put complication into an otherwise simple matter.
- Too much emphasis is put on the one ambiguous bearing (Karimun to Longyamen), without considering the possibility that in this sector, due to the number of islands, sailing by sight took precedence over sailing by the compass.
- Over emphasis on the dangers of the Singapore Main Channel in order justify a more circuitous route in "calmer waters". After all, this has become the main channel between East and West for the tens of thousands vessels, large and small, that sail yearly through it.

FIGURE 9.1
Long Yamen



Source: The Zheng He Epic, p. 260.

CONCLUSION

This paper does not contest the claim that Lingga Peak/Lingga Island is the other Longyamen (of the Song and Yuan) dynasty. This claim is most probably valid.

We can safely say that the arguments put forward by Mr Lin and others have demolished the claim that Johor Lama was Longyamen.

That Longyamen is Singapore there is no longer any doubt. There is a possibility that the Singapore Main Straits is the Longyamen, but the likelihood is low. Historical description of Longyamen is that of a place. This leaves Keppel Harbour as the most likely. After all, this is the place of the Batu Berlayer (Lot's Wife). This, after all, is the best reason for our claim!

Notes

This paper is based on a talk given on 28 March 2003, organized by Friends of Admiral Zheng He, Singapore and sponsored by Cable Car (Pte.), Singapore.

1. Zheng He, also spelled as Cheng Ho.
2. Gavin Menzies, *1421: The Year China Discovered America*, (New York: William Morrow, 2002).
3. *Sejarah Melayu,* or *Malay Annals*; an annotated translation by C.C. Brown (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1970).
4. Prapantja, *Nagarakretagama* (Djakarta: Siliwangi, 1953); and *The Pararaton: A Study of the Southeast Asian Chronicle* (New Delhi: Sundeep Prakashan, 1996).
5. 林我铃: 《龙牙门新考》, 新加坡南洋学会出版, 1999。
6. W.P. Groeneveldt, *Notes on the Malay Archipelago and Malacca*, compiled from Chinese source (first published in 1876; reappeared in the Dutch Journal in 1880; reprinted in Jakarta: Bahratara, 1960).

7. There is no Straits so named. It is believed that Groeneveldt meant the straits between Lingga Island and Singkep Island.
8. 费信：《星槎胜览》。冯承钧校注，北京：中华书局，1954。
9. *Chau Ju-Kua, His Work on the Chinese and Arab Trade in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, entitled Chu-Fanshi. Translated from the Chinese and annotated by Friedrich Hirth and W.W. Rockhill (New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1966).
10. 赵汝适：《诸蕃志》，冯承钧校注本，台湾商务印书馆，1962年版。
11. 张燮：《东西洋考》之《舟师考·西洋针路》，谢方点校本，中华书局，1981年版。
12. Roland Braddell, "Lung Ya-Men and Tan Ma-His", *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 42, 1 (July 1969): 10–24.
13. 针经，如《指南正法》，《顺风相送》等。
14. Arabian, Indian and Southeast Asian navigation arts were also very advanced, except that I am not competent to comment of these areas.
15. Swells coming from the stern of the junk and overtaking it.
16. Technically known as "flume tanks".
17. Sailing almost against the wind.
18. Fenestrated rudders can still be seen in our Tongkangs.
19. Chinese rowing method is different from the West. Chinese rowers dig their oars almost vertically into the water.
20. In larger vessels they may be positioned on the sides.
21. 罗懋登：《西洋记》上海：上海古籍出版社，1985。
22. The art of measuring distance covered at sea.
23. In contrast, the colonial naval powers such as Portugal, Spain and Britain overcame this by building their ships overseas, where virgin forests can be found. Thus India, the Philippines and America became the place where these powers eventually built their vessels for their subsequent expansion.
24. 《龙牙门新考》，新加坡南洋学会出版，1999。

25. He used the "Indonesian Pilot" published by the British Admiralty for much of the information on the appearance of landmarks, winds, currents etc.
26. Mr Lin took the word 取 to mean "going towards" or "reach". A more accurate meaning according to the present writer is "look for" or "sight".
27. 黄支国：《汉书：地理志》。
28. 汪大渊：《岛夷志略·龙牙门条》。
29. 《顺风相送》广东往磨六甲针。
30. 《顺风相送》广东往磨六甲针："夜不可行船，防南边有牛屎礁"。
31. Recent scholars have estimated a vessel traveled 40 *lis* in one "geng".

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